# Imperial Agra Of the Moghuls

BY

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DEDICATED

**BY PERMISSION**

**TO**

His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey,

G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E.,

*Governor of the United Provinces*

**OF**

AGRA AND OUDH.

# FOREWORD.

Too much can hardly be written about that entrancing period of Indian History—the age of the Grand Moghuls. The empire which they reared was, in the words of Macaulay, one of the most extensive and splendid in the world. In no European kingdom was so large a population subject to a single prince or so large a revenue paid into the treasury. The beauty and magnificence of the buildings created by the sovereigns of Hindustan amazed even travellers who had seen St. Peter's. The innumerable retinues and gorgeous decorations which surrounded the throne, dazzled even eyes which were accustomed to the pomp of Versailles.

This description, vivid as it is, is however, little more than an outline. It needs the touch of one who, like the author of the present work, has lingered for many days among the edifices which this dynasty has beqeathed to us, to fill in the foreground of the picture and bring back to life the figures of the past. Walls, it is said, have tongues: and of none is this more true than of those which compose the monuments at

Agra. Magnificent gateways, spacious courts, shady gardens, inlaid pillars, jewelled canopies, marble screens, latticed windows—all of these are instinct with messages: all of them still vibrate with the echoes of long-hushed voices. But their meaning cannot be understood without an interpreter—an interpreter who is not only versed in the events of a by-gone age but who has also the insight which enables him to place himself, a silent spectator in the picture, and describe to us the pageant as it gradually unrolls itself. It then becomes easier for us to realise when we visit the Hall of Public Audience at the Fort how "aloft in awful state the godlike hero sate on his imperial throne": or, when we tarry for a while in that noblest of all tombs, the Taj, how inimitably the Moghuls have enshrined in marble, just as Shakespeare did in verse, the form of one of whom it could well be said thereafter that "her eternal summer should not fade."

Though the author has perhaps little that is new to tell us, he has collected for us in a very agreeable form many of the half-forgotten anecdotes which the writers of those days have delighted to retail about their princes: and it is

these, together with the setting in which he places them and the touch of imagination which he adds, which give his work its value. He presents a series of kaleidoscopes which show us less the might of the Emperors in war and their sagacity in statesmanship, than their ardour in those forms of relaxation which were prevalent at the time.

In these days when life holds few periods of ease, and when even those have to be planned out carefully beforehand, so that the most may be made of them, it is often pleasant to recall an age when hurry was a thing unknown: when it was sufficient to start a campaign on a date fixed by astrologers and carry it out with due regard to the comfort and diversion of the court which accompanied the army: when an Emperor could dispose of grave matters of state with a summary order, and could spend much of the day in the apartments of his ladies or in the discussion of philosophy or religion : when political knots were cut and seldom unravelled. Without this leisure which permitted the Moghuls to supervise in person all that specially interested them—and their interests were manifold—they would surely never have been able "to build like

giants and complete like jewellers." So long as the Taj, the Jasmine tower, the Chisti shrine and Itmaduddoulah's tomb remain standing, it is this fact, more than all else, which will impress the multitude of sightseers who visit Agra from afar —this fact about a dynasty which, above all others, knew how to rule its people imperially.

COLLECTOR'S HOUSE,
AGRA,
The 17th August,
1933.

J. H. DARWIN,
C. I. E., I. C. S.

# PREFACE.

About eight years ago, one fine October evening, I for the first time paid a visit to the Taj and the Fort of Akbar at Agra. I loitered about in the deserted Khas Mahal, dreaming of the former grandeur of the place. The bewitching glare of the Moghul court still seemed to haunt there. As the shades of evening began to thicken, the halls and apartments round me whispered in my ears their tales of bliss and despair from the eloquent past. The figures of Akbar, Jahangir, Nur Jahan, Shah Jahan and Mumtaz crossed my mental vision, filling my heart with awe and amazement.

There was Akbar, sitting with his sons and grandsons, watching the elephant-fight. I aked him why his friend and courtier, Abul Fazl, was not with him. He cast a sad look on Prince Salim, while his eyes glistened with tears. "Long live *Din Ilahi*," said I. The emperor re-set his crown, wiped his eyes and smiled in triumph.

I saw Nurjahan walking hand in hand with Jahangir in the *Anguri Bagh* and reproving her drunken lord for his follies and foibles. "I have reduced it now to five cups, darling, at your request," said the crest-fallen emperor. At this the proud queen felt flattered and presented Jahangir with a fresh phial of *itar* which her mother had prepared from roses. "But I must have a fine tomb for my father," said she, and the royal opium-eater drowsily nodded assent.

Next I saw Shah Jahan—thin, pale, helpless, captive—supported on the arms of Jahanara, as he lay dying in the Jasmine Tower, with his longing glance fixed on the last resting place of his long-lost queen.

"Is Aurangzeb come?" he gasped out. But there was no reply. Jahanara smoothed her father's pillow and hastened to moisten his lips with water. The next moment Shah Jahan heaved a deep sigh and sank down to eternal rest. The scene gave me a painful shock and I retraced my steps towards Amar Singh gate. There I discovered myself face to face with Shivaji who was leaving the Dewan-i-am in a hurry, followed by Kumar Ram Singh of

Jaipur. The great Mahratta leader looked red with indignation as he had fallen out with Anrangzeb. "How did the emperor receive you?" I enquired. He rolled up his eyes, raised himself to his full height, unsheathed his *Bhawani*, thrust its blade into the air in mad fury, and nearly lost his balance. Then he jumped upon his horse without the stirrup, and the next moment was gone.

I saw these and many others of the dead come back to life again. It was then that I conceived the idea of writing a book on Agra, the imperial city of the great Moghuls. I do not claim, however, to convey a message to the world through these pages. It is a book written by a cursory observer for whom the mediaeval structures of Agra and its neighbourhood have a great fascination. All that I have said here has been more vividly narrated by the emperors themselves, or their court historians. There is little in this small volume to attract the annalist or the antiquarian. It is "culled of many simples" and I am deeply indebted to all writers on the subject, both living and dead. I shall feel amply repaid if my efforts to elucidate some of the wonders of

of the mediaeval East are found useful to the travellers who visit this city of the Taj.

I now release the book from the quiet corner of a closet with the following well-known lines of the poet whispered into its ears :

"Go, little book, God send thee good passage....
And specially let this be thy prayer
Unto them all that thee will read or hear,
Where thou art wrong, after their help to call,
Thee to correct in any part or all."

Agra, August, 1933. } KESHAB CHANDRA MAZUMDAR.

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I have also to thank my learned colleagues, Messrs. B. C. Mukherji, M. A., P. C. Goswami, B. Sc., L. T., B. N. Mehta, B. A., B. T. and A. H. Khan, D. M. C., for the help they rendered. My thanks are also due to my two beloved students, Shiv Singh and Liladhar Singh of the Intermediate class for their helpful services.

But the name which is uppermost in my mind is that of Lieut. Rao Krishnapal Singh of Awagarh, Member of the U. P. Legislative Council, for his efforts to procure me some original Paintings of the Moghul school, which I acknowledge with genuine gratitude.

K. C. M.

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# PART I

# THE COURT OF THE GREAT MOGHULS

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

We may visit the famous buildings of Agra at any stage of our life, but the feeling that invariably prevails is one of admiration for the builders. We flit about from the Fort to the Taj, from the Taj to Etmaduddaula, thence to Sikandra, and down Akbar's road we go, all those twenty-three miles to Fatehpur Sikri, much quicker than the Moghul emperors ever traversed with their long retinue of servants, horses, camels, elephants, soldiers and harem women. We see nothing however, of the life that was lived in these mansions, now that the dead past has buried its dead. But as we move from place to place, and feast our eyes with the grandeur and beauty of these mighty edifices, once teeming with life, we are constantly reminded of Akbar, the monarch of monarchs, of Jahangir and Nur Jahan, of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz, and of Aurangzeb, the misguided upholder of Islam. We naturally like to know how they lived and moved in private life, how they ruled their subjects and what status was enjoyed by women in those far-off days.

Historians tell us that the lives of women in those times, even in the highest places, were very different from what we now observe in British India. Sir Thomas Roe describes how he once caught a glimpse of the wives of Jahangir. "At one side in a window were his two principal wives, whose curiosity made them break little holes in a grate of reed that hung before it, to gaze on me. I saw first their fingers, and after laying their faces close, now one eye, now another; sometimes I could discern the full proportion. They were indifferently white, black hair smoothed up; but if (they) had had no other light, their diamonds and pearls had sufficed to show them. When I looked up, they retired, and were so merry that I supposed they laughed at me." The women were generally huddled together in a confused mass in the harem and the example of the emperor, so far as his treatment of women was concerned, was followed by the chiefs and nobles. They were considered to be an object of luxury and enjoyment and were denied any social status of their own. There are instances to prove that they were purchased for the emperor in the open market. The renowned Udaipuri Begum of Aurangzeb, the most scrupulous of the Moghul

emperors, had been purchased by his eldest brother, Dara, on whose execution, she was welcomed into the harem of Aurangzeb. Etmad-uddaula, the father of Nur Jahan, tells us that as many as 5000 women nestled in the Moghul harems, employed in different capacities. The male issues of some of these women had to undergo solitary confinement for life, lest they should assert their rights, when set free. Only those women who were the emperor's favourites, could procure liberty for their sons, as well as a decent allowance for life, in the shape of a Jaigir. But such cases were few and far between.

Hawkins who was very intimate with Jahangir, says that the daily expenses of the emperor's harem were thirty thousand rupees and that the emperor generally visited his women at noon, after which he held the Durbar or watched the elephant-fights.

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## THE MOGHUL DURBAR.

The Moghul Durbar was a grand affair and was held by Jahangir every afternoon in the Dewan-i-am of the Fort at Agra. As a matter of fact, all the Moghul emperors, from Akbar down to

Aurangzeb, held their Durbars in this great hall during the time that they took up their residence in this imperial city which flourished in all its glory for nearly a century.

The open court below the Dewan-i-am was covered over with a curtain tent larger and longer than the hall itself and extended as far as the middle of the court. This place was enclosed by railings wrapped over with silver plates and was set apart for the common people. The pillars supporting the tent were similarly overlaid with silver. This gorgeous tent was red from without and lined with beautiful Muslipatam chintzes from within. As to the arched galleries round the court, every Omrah was permitted to adorn one of them at his own expense. So there was a spirit of emulation among the nobles, each trying to excel his neighbour in stateliness and splendour.

The emperor sat on his gorgeous throne at the upper end of the hall in splendid attire. His vest was delicately embroidered in gold and his turban bedecked with the costliest of jewels. Under the small gallery overhead where the emperor sat, there was a raised platform, enclosed with silver railings and spread with carpets, reserved for the Omrahs and foreign ambassadors.

The pillars of the hall were hung with rich tapestries, while the ceiling was covered with flowered satin canopies. The lower end of the hall was set apart for the gentry. Round the imperial throne stood Khojas waving *Chamars* of peacock-feather. The Rajas, Omrahs, ambassadors, generals and provincial governors stood with folded hands and with eyes fixed on the ground.

Before the actual work of the Durbar commenced, splendid Arab horses were exhibited in the court below, in front of the imperial throne; then came the huge elephants richly caparisoned, which raised their trunks and saluted the emperor; then followed the deer, bulls, buffaloes, rhinos, tigers and other animals and birds; last of all, passed the armoured soldiers, the well-reputed Moghul infantry—all under the scrutinizing glance of the emperor.

The inspection over, petitions were submitted to the emperor, whose word was law. There were no written codes and no advocates. Civil cases were generally decided according to the custom obtaining in the country, while criminal cases followed the wake of tradition or the imperial will. The commonest forms of

punishment were death, mutilation or life-long slavery. Blinding, flaying alive, impaling, chopping off hands, legs, noses and ears and tearing off by blood-hounds were widely practised. Another barbarous punishment inflicted on men of rank, guilty of high treason, was to sew them up in the fresh skin of an ass and thus suffocate them to death. It was not unusual to make the traitor sit on the back of a filth-covered ass or elephant, with his face turned towards the tail and parade him through the streets. Such a punishment had been inflicted by Jahangir on his son, Khusru, and by Aurangzeb on his brother, Dara. Cowards and deserters were punished by having their beards shaved off and paraded through the streets in female attire, seated on the back of a donkey. There was hardly any sentence for long-term imprisonment. The state prison of any celebrity was the Fort of Gwalior. In all cases of capital punishment, the emperor's approval was necessary.

Each and every petitioner, from the highest nobleman to the meanest peasant, had to prostrate himself before the throne when summoned to the imperial presence. Both Akbar and Jahangir maintained this disgraceful practice which was

abolished during the reign of Shah Jahan, only to be reintroduced by Aurangzeb. Only Sir Thomas Roe had the courage to protest against this ignominious court etiquette and was exempted by Jahangir from paying this customary homage. When addressing the emperor, the courtiers had to bend low and speak "in a bondman's key, with bated breath and whispering humbleness." The Durbar was generally held for two hours, from 1 P. M. to 3 P. M.

Outside the tent in the court-yard below, and in the outskirts of the Fort, one could see singers, dancers and magicians—all plying a busy trade; jugglers surrounded by spell-bound spectators; snake-charmers with snakes coiling round their necks and shoulders; and fortune-tellers promising sterile women the birth of a much-coveted child.

There was a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and hastening happy wedlock hours; smoking, quarrelling, cheating, tittering, meeting and parting. There were quacks selling their vigour-producing drugs, bluffers imposing on simple folks, knaves picking pockets and the village urchins casting furtive glances at the tinselled dancers. There

were rogues and buffoons, hawkers and oil-men, wrestlers and huntsmen, all pushing and jostling and helping to augment the bustle and confusion that reigned over the place.

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## ELEPHANT-FIGHTS.

Elephant-fights were a favourite sport for the Moghul emperors. These were held on the eastern side of the Fort near the Jumna, immediately after the Durbar, "when toil remitting, lent its turn to play." Wrestling and fencing and combats between unarmed men and ferocious beasts also had their turn. This spot was specially selected for holding the sports to enable the Begums to witness the same from the palace windows.

Two wild elephants, separated by a mud wall, two cubits high, entered the arena and rushed against each other, goaded on by their *mahouts.* The elephants fought with their tusks and trunks, wounding each other severely, while their loud and long yells resounded for miles together. There were generally two *mahouts* on the back of each elephant, one of whom had to lose his life in the thick of

the furious onslaught. After a strenuous fight, the victorious combatant would break through the mud wall and madly pursue the vanquished foe. Not even terrifying fire-works could check the progress of the infuriated victor. The poor *mahouts* who staked their lives in this dangerous warfare were richly rewarded for their pains; and in case of death or mutilation, their families were maintained at state expense. These men always took a last farewell from their wives and children before engaging in their dreadful task which played such a havoc with their lives.

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## THE NAUROZ.

The Nauroz or Spring Festival was introduced by Akbar who took the idea from the Persians. The royal throne was placed under a richly-embroidered velvet canopy in the Dewan-i-am, the floor underneath being covered with cloth of gold. The Omrahs also laid out their own tents in close proximity to the emperor's, each trying to outdo his brother in gaudiness and grandeur. It was also an occasion for conferring honours and rewards by the emperor upon his officers.

A Nauroz Bazar was annually held near the Dewan-i-am where the wives of the chief Omrahs and Rajas appeared as stall-keepers. Only the Emperor and the Begums of the palace had access to it. There were pleasant wit-combats between the emperor and his queens on one side, who came in as customers, and the wives of the Rajas on the other, who kept the stalls and sold their tinsel wares at fancy prices. It is said that after much higgling, a piece of sugar-candy which was solemnly given out to be a real diamond, was once sold for a lac of rupees. The Rajas and Omrahs sent their ladies to the Bazar, so that they might pick up an acquaintance with the chief Begums of the imperial household.

The Nauroz festival was introduced by Akbar to draw his chiefs closer together; and with dancing and music, feasting and merry-making, the whole function was made an immensely enjoyable occasion. It was, however, abolished by Aurangzeb sometime after his accession to the throne.

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## CHAPTER II.

## THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY.

Another custom which was introduced by Akbar was that of weighing the emperor on his birthday. Like Nauroz, it was an occasion for great mirth and festivity. Sir Thomas Roe speaks of this as one of the greatest court festivals during the reign of Jahangir. A description of the festival may be given here.

It was in a large and beautiful garden, smiling with flowers, that the scales of massive gold were generally set up for weighing. The Omrahs sat there on carpets, awaiting the arrival of the emperor who came practically laden with diamonds and other precious stones all over his person. The rubies to his rings were "as great as walnuts" and "the pearls such as Sir Thomas' eyes were amazed at". "Suddenly he entered into the scales," says Roe, "sat like a woman on his legs, and there was put in against him many bags to fit his weight, which were changed six times, and they say was silver, and that I understood his weight to be nine thousand rupees; after, with gold and jewels, and precious stones, but I saw none; it

being in bags, might be pebbles; then, against cloth of gold, silk, stuffs, linen, spices and all sorts of goods. Lastly against meal, butter, corn. After he was weighed, he ascended his throne, and had basins of nuts, almonds, fruits, spices of all sorts made in thin silver, which he cast about, and his great men scrambled prostrate upon their bellies; which seeing I did not, he reached one basin almost full, and poured into my cloak."

The articles against which the emperor was weighed were given away to the poor and the needy. The chief Omrahs were also weighed after the emperor.

The birthday anniversary was characterised by great mirth and gaiety at court and also throughout the city. The day was spent in an unbroken whirl of dancing, music, eating, drinking, merry-making and wild revelry, while the night witnessed revels of a lustier description. Soon after dusk, the entire Fort was brilliantly illuminated. The whole place teemed with life. Omrahs, members of the royal household, soldiers, sentinels, beggars, musicians, drunkards, magicians, hawkers, florists and dancing-girls with their paramours were the most conspicuous

among the heterogeneous multitude. Wherever you turned, you saw nothing but bright lamps, flowers and dancing women; smelt nothing but sweet fragrance, and heard nothing but the sound of melodious music. The inner apartments of the palace also witnessed a scene that was far more gay and gladsome. Lamps of silver, of the most exquisite design, emitted a soft, soothing light; myrrh and frankincense were kept burning, which filled the air with sweet odour; and the garlands of flowers coiling round the marble pillars, bedsteads and the lovely persons of youthful Begums moving to and fro, in and about the Khas Mahal, charged the balmy breeze with intoxicating fragrance. Rose-water flowed from many a fountain and played in the marble basin below. The *Itr* of roses which had been invented by Jahangir's mother-in-law, Asmat Begum, the mother of Nur Jahan, was used by the emperor and his wives in great profusion. The ladies of the harem with their numerous female attendants, paced the hall and the adjoining apartments, dressed in rich silk of a variety of hues, and adorned with precious jewellery. All seemed happy and gay and bent upon making the most of the delightful occasion. On this auspicious night the

emperor would be all kindness and courtesy to everyone of his innumerable wives, and would refuse nothing. Jaigirs, allowances, ornaments and other favours were theirs for the asking. Everyone of the ladies tried to appear in her best on this gala night, so as to attract the emperor to herself. It was a great opportunity for winning the heart of the emperor, and that opportunity was never missed. Of the female attendants of the chief wives, some danced, others sang; some played on the musical instruments, others sat in a circle round the emperor and exchanged looks of keen desire with the one man among many women. On went the dance; joy was unconfined. The light of a thousand lamps was reflected on the bejewelled fingers, hands, necks, fore-heads, waist-bands and feet of the dancing maids, whose soft eyes sent a thrill through the emperor's heart. He eyed at one, caressed another, smiled at a third, drank from the hands of the next, and so the cup of joy was kept full to the brim. But palace intrigues, personal rancour and petty jealousies among the ladies of the court showed that peace was a thing unknown in the harem of the great Moghuls.

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## THE EMPEROR IN LIGHTER VEIN.

The *Pachisi* was a favourite sport with the emperors. The arrangement of the Pachisi board is seen both at Agra and at Fatehpur Sikri. The game was played by the emperor with living pieces or fair-looking girls attired in gay clothes of various colours. They moved from one square to another with the throw of the dice, and the raised seat at one end of the open court at Fatehpur Sikri shows where the emperor sat while playing this ingenious game of chess with the slave-girls of his harem.

Not far off from the *Pachisi* court, are the apartments known as *Ankh Michauli* where Akbar is said to have played hide-and-seek at Fatehpur Sikri with the ladies of his harem. Both these imperial innovations must have afforded a fund of mirth to the gay Zenana who either took part in or watched these lively pastimes.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE FORT AND PALACES WITHIN.

The main gates of the Fort were guarded by Omrahs who generally lived in camps. The Rajput nobles preferred life in the open air and would never consent to live within the walls of the Fort. Life in these camps, either in times of peace or of war, was one of great jollity and sprightliness. Dancing girls and musicians were always in attendance, the livelier scenes being enacted particularly during the hours of the night. Flowers and garlands and fragrant waters filled the air with glee. The braided hair of the fair dancers shone with glittering gold and diamonds, while the fire of their eyes singed the hearts of their admirers beyond all hopes of repair.

The walls of the Fort were decorated with flags, festoons and green leaves on ceremonial occasions and the soldiers stood in a row, while music was played. Even at ordinary times, the Fort had a gay appearance and was like a busy bee-hive. All the requirements of the imperial

household were manufactured within the Fort. Silk-weavers, goldsmiths, painters, tailors, carpenters, shoe-makers, linen-drapers — all had their workshops within the Fort. All the best artists and workmen of the country were there, working from morn till night on a fixed salary.

Splendour and luxury marked the lives of the chief ladies of the court. Some of them had as many as one hundred female attendants. Their smallest wants were readily ministered to. They were always provided with rich jewellery and clothes. Their palaces were surrounded with groves and gardens and decorated with fine paintings, some of which were their own productions. At Fatehpur Sikri there was a Girls' School adjoining the palace, established by Akbar, for the education of the young ladies of his court. The palaces within the Fort, both at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, had underground chambers where the fair ladies could retreat at noon and idle away the sultry hours during the fierce hot weather. There were spacious roofs for them to sleep on during summer nights. They were surrounded on all sides with pleasures of the eye—beautiful palaces and gardens, flowers and foliage, gold and jewellery—and moved in and

about the royal palaces and pleasure-grounds like caged birds, singing songs of unrequited love to their fellow-sufferers, plucking the rose and the jasmine from the palace-gardens or wandering about the labyrinths of the basement apartments. Such was undoubtedly the life of the chief ladies of the Moghul court, but the hundreds and thousands that waited upon them, were no better than beasts of burden whose existence was synonymous with unremitting toil and unbroken slavery.

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## THE SHISH MAHAL.

The Shish Mahal was the bathing place and dressing-room of the Begums. It took its name from the innumerable tiny mirrors which were fixed upon the plaster of the walls and the ceilings of these apartments. Countless lamps used to hang from the ceiling and reflect their beams on the surrounding walls and the shining floor. The beautiful designs of fishes on the floor looked like living things as the water flowed over them from the fountains playing within the apartments. The emperor disported himself here in the fragrant waters with his Begums whose youthful forms were reflected in the numberless mirrors pasted on the walls.

## THE EMPEROR IN PUBLIC.

So far about the private life of the emperors. In public, however, their life was the awe and wonder of the East. Their Durbars dazzled the eyes of all who beheld them. But the thing that stirred people's imagination the most, were the imperial campaigns. The emperor sat in a gorgeous throne placed on the back of a richly-caparisoned elephant and marched out exactly at the time appointed by the court astrologers. It was not unusual for the ladies of the court to accompany the emperor. It was in one such campaign that Mumtaz Mahal accompanied Shah Jahan and died of child-birth at Burhanpur situated on the banks of the Tapti river in Central India. Thousands of soldiers stood in a row, their muskets being adorned with nice red flags. The Omrahs followed the emperor in gorgeous costumes. On the approach of the emperor the soldiers used to give a loud outcry, " Long live the emperor!" "On each side went two eunuchs that carried small maces of gold set all over with rubies, with a long bunch of white horse tail to drive away flies; before him went drums, trumpets and loud music, and many canopies, umbrellas and other strange ensigns of majesty."

## CHAPTER IV.

## AGRA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century when Akbar had finally settled down in his imperial capital at Agra, it was one of the most populous and prosperous cities in the world. The fame of Akbar's extraordinary wisdom as a ruler, had travelled over to Europe and his spirit of toleration had become the popular talk. It was about this time that European travellers, being attracted by these reports, began to pour into India. They saw that Agra was a splendid city almost semicircular in shape, fifteen miles long and about half as broad, stretching along the right bank of the Jumna. Its population at the commencement of Jahangir's reign was as large as that of London in those days, and many of the stone-paved streets of the city were lined with shops where goods from the various countries of Asia and Europe were sold.

As years rolled on and successive Moghul emperors began to reside at Agra, palatial buildings of the great nobles began to rise on the

banks of the Jumna between Agra Fort and the Taj. These palaces generally belonged to Rajas Omrahs, Kazis and other State officials. The city proper was practically inhabited by soldiers, shopkeepers, and the menial servants of the State. They lived in mud or thatched houses. The thatched shops frequently caught fire and the goods were destroyed. On all sides in the business quarters you saw nothing but unsightly thatched huts. All the ordinary inhabitants were very humble, working in mean attire, year in, year out. To appear wealthy and prosperous, was to court trouble. So while the proud Omrahs, Generals and Muslim Jaigirdars went about on elephants, horses and in palanquins on the public road in full splendour, the Hindu merchants kept themselves engaged quietly in their trade in a corner of the city. No brick-houses could be seen throughout the city, as there was no middle class. The whole population consisted of proud, wealthy noblemen on the one hand, and humble, down-trodden inhabitants on the other. It was not till the commencement of the nineteenth century that a properly-constituted middle class began to make itself felt as a power in India.

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## LIFE OF THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES.

Even during the palmy days of the Moghul empire, the life and property of the subjects were not safe. Sir Thomas Roe describes the insecurity of the public highways during the time of Jahangir. Thevenot mentions how in 1666, the year of Shah Jahan's death, the road from Agra to Delhi, the most frequented road of the time, was infested with Thugs. They were professional assassins and ranged themselves in bands on the high roads. They won the confidence of innocent travellers under pretence of friendship and accompanied them for a few stages. At last after decoying them to a solitary spot, they strangled them to death and robbed their property. It is on record that a Thug named Buhram took as many as 931 lives in 40 years and that another, named Fateh Khan, murdered 508 persons in 20 years. In Bengal which was far away from the capital, these murders were more frequent, and were practised, not on the high roads, but mostly on the great rivers. The Thugs looked with pride and exultation on the daring murders they committed. Oudh, Gwalior, Rajputana, Malwa, Rewa and the Nizam's

Dominions were the places most frequented by them. Before going to commit these heinous crimes, they always offered up prayers for the success of their enterprise. Grave-diggers were sent in advance to keep the graves ready for the would-be victims. An ideal spot for such graves was a low earthen mound caused by some high land breaking into ravines and interspersed with small streams. Before falling on their victims, the assassins generally managed to get the party scattered over a wide area, and then, at a signal from the Chief, each man fell on the traveller assigned to him and took life out, with the help of a coin tied to the end of a handkerchief. Such was the condition of the Indian roads, and such the insecurity of life and property, when the Moghul power was at its zenith.

Colonel Meadows Taylor published his "Confessions of a Thug" when he was employed as a captain in the army of the Nizam of Hyderabad. In this book he vividly describes the horrible deeds of the Thugs who moved from one part of the Moghul territory to another, killing men, plundering their goods and leaving the dead bodies with marks of strangulation, by

the roadside. Such was the life of travellers in those days, and no steps were taken to mitigate this evil. As a matter of fact, it was not considered to be a part of the duty of the Civil Government to keep the road safe for wayfarers. So long as the imperial treasury was kept well-supplied with revenue, the safety and comfort of the subjects were of little or no concern to the rulers.

But it must be acknowledged that the suppression of Thugs was not an easy affair. Only an well-organised government like the British Government could ever hope to accomplish the task. The Thugs were a sworn body of assassins who drew their inspiration from the goddess Kalee. They called themselves her votaries, and murder to them was an act of devotion and sacrifice. A Thug was never to break faith with the sacred guild to which he belonged. His pickaxe and his dagger which he always carried with him, were the symbols of the great goddess' teeth and ribs respectively. His handkerchief or strangling cloth also owed its origin to her. He belonged to a hereditary clan which had struck its root deep into the soil. The miserable plight of the travellers of those days can,

therefore, better be imagined than described. This was however, only one of the many vexations which people had to endure in those far-off days even when the Moghul rule had been firmly established in India. Life was hard, discomforts many and personal liberty a dream and a hallucination. At home and abroad, peace of mind was a thing beyond conjecture. The people had no rights as against the State. The Imperial will was the law of the land and the Emperor and the State were synonymous terms. A man might be a noble grandee to-day, but a pauper the next, according to the caprice of the Emperor. Personal favourites of the monarch, with or without ability or learning, rose by leaps and bounds. Some of the harem ladies wielded great influence over their royal lovers and were instrumental in bringing about the ruin of many with whom they happened to be displeased. Even the highest officials were at the beck and call of the Emperor all the twenty-four hours. The standard of morality was very low and much corruption prevailed. Even the biggest Omrahs were forced to marry the woman pointed out by the Emperor or his chief wives, though not infrequently under the temptation of Jaigirs or high posts. There was no moral or social check

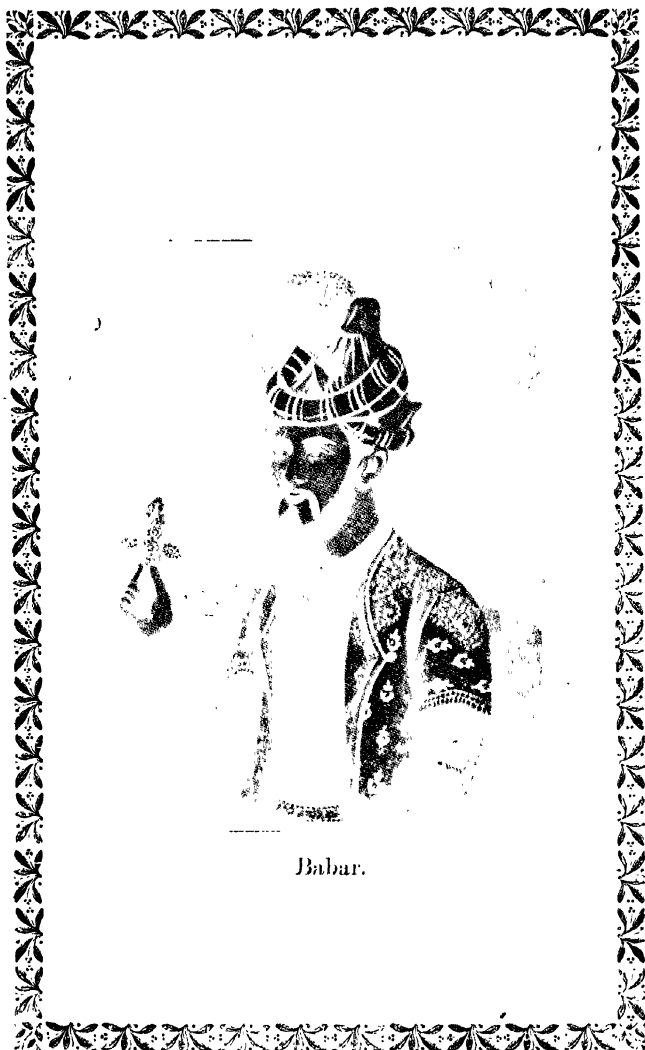
prohibiting a man from marrying as many women as he liked, or keeping them in his employ for immoral purposes, as this sort of libertinism was the order of the day.

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# PART II

## The Moghul Emperors

## 1526-1707



Babar.

# CHAPTER I.

## BABAR (1526-1530)

Babar, the king of Kabul, was a great adventurer. He was a soldier of fortune and had no genius for building up an empire. He lived in India only during the last five years of his life and died in 1530, in the forty-eighth year of his age. But before his death he had undoubtedly laid the foundation of a great empire which was to be completed by his grandson, Akbar.

After the battle of Panipat had been fought and won, Babar at once sent a detachment of troops to occupy Agra. The spoil of the royal treasury was enormous. His eldest son, Humayun who had acted as one of his generals, received Rs. 3,00,000 and immense treasure, including the Kohinoor, then valued at 'half the daily expenses of the world.'

Babar says in his Memoirs that when he came to Agra, it was the hot season. The heat was so oppressive that year that many of his men died. The people were hostile and he could find neither grain for his army, nor fodder for his beasts. His troops grew discontented and

longed to return to Kabul. Babar, however, put a stop to this murmuring by pointing out to his Chiefs how a powerful enemy had been overcome and a mighty kingdom was at their feet. His firm determination not only changed the minds of his own men, but helped him to win over many of his enemies.

Soon, however, Babar had to meet his only formidable rival, the great Rana Sangram Sinha of Chitor. In 1527 he encamped at Sikri and made elaborate preparations to meet the Rajput prince and his chieftains. It was at this juncture that Babar gave up drinking and destroyed his vessels of wine. Every man in the army swore by the Koran to crush the 'heathens.' The two armies met, and the Rajputs, after a heavy massacre, gave up all hope and fled.

Babar spent the last two years of his life at Agra in the garden-palace named Charbagh on the left bank of the Jumna, trying to consolidate the new empire which he had conquered but never loved. To him India was only a vast land of immense wealth, with none of the beautiful mountain scenery of Kabul. He died in his palace at Agra in the same year as Cardinal Wolsey died in England, and was buried at Kabul.

The story of Babar's death is somewhat extraordinary. His son, Humayun whom he loved dearly, had fallen seriously ill and it was apprehended that he might die. Babar was a great believer in the force of will and he at once resolved to give up his own life for the sake of his son. He walked three times round the bed of his son and then exclaimed all of a sudden, " I have borne it away! I have borne it away!" It is related by Muhammadan chroniclers that from this moment Humayun began to recover, but Babar was soon laid up with a severe disease of the intestines which paved the way to his death.

On his death-bed Babar had asked Humayun to take all possible care of his brothers and to live with them in peace after his accession to the throne. It must be remembered that most of Humayun's troubles arose out of his great leniency to his brothers. He followed his departed father's wishes to the best of his power, refusing to see that leniency and kingly authority did not go together.

## CHAPTER II.

### HUMAYUN (1530-1539 and 1555-1556).

Humayun succeeded his father in December, 1530, at the twenty-third year of his age and was duly crowned in the Charbagh palace at Agra, where Babar had spent in peace the closing years of his wandering, unquiet life. The young prince was courteous, brave and accomplished, but was lacking in resolution and force of character. At the time of his accession to the throne, he had three formidable rivals: his brother Kamran at Kabul; the Afghans in the East; and Bahadur Shah, the King of Gujrat, who was fast approaching towards Agra. Babar had only curbed Northern India which still remained unconquered. Sher Khan, the Afghan Chief, had never given up his dream of sovereignty. During Humayun's absence in Bengal to reduce the Afghan power, his brother, Hindal, came over to Agra and proclaimed himself emperor. In the meantime, Sher Khan proclaimed himself Sultan in Bihar under the title of Sher Shah.

When these tidings reached Humayun in Bengal, he was soon roused to action and proceeded with his army towards Buxar where he was suddenly checked by Shor Shah. Humayun's army was in a grievous plight and there was no hope of getting any help from Agra, as the country around was entirely in the hands of the enemy. A treaty was arranged, and Humayun made ready to retire. But suddenly at break of dawn, the Afghan army fell upon the unwary Moghuls and slew them almost to a man. Humayun returned to Agra in 1539, almost unattended, his life being saved by a water-carrier who helped him across the Ganges on his water-skin.

Humayun next tried to unite with his brothers, Hindal, Askari and Kamran, but in vain. In the battle that was fought near Kanauj in 1540, Humayun sustained a severe defeat at the hands of Sher Shah and led a wandering life till 1555.

In 1542, while Humayun was passing through the deserts of Rajputana and Sind, a son was born to him at Amarkot, who came to be known afterwards by the name of Akbar the Great. Akbar's mother was Begum Hamida Banu, the daughter of Ali Akbar Jami, a Sayyad of the Prophet's

race. Humayun then went over to Persia, and with the help of the Persian Monarch, conquered Kandahar in 1545 and Kabul in 1547. In 1545 Sher Shah died at Kalinjar, fighting with the Rajputs, and in the course of the next ten years, the Afghan power gradually dwindled into insignificance at the hands of his successors. In 1555 Humayun came down from Kabul with a small army and took Agra and Delhi from Sikander Sur, one of Sher Shah's nephews, who had proclaimed himself monarch. In this memorable fight with the Afghans, prince Akbar, a boy of thirteen years, fought like a brave general by the side of his father and won his laurels even at this tender age. In January, 1556, Humayun died in the forty-ninth year of his age, slipping down the steps of his palace library in the old fort at Delhi. He had just heard the call for evening prayer, and in his hurry to join the same at the mosque, he came by this fatal accident. It is said that the Taj at Agra was built on the model of Humayun's tomb at Delhi, as designed by Akbar some years after his father's death.

Both Babar and Humayun failed to command respect from their Hindu subjects as they looked upon these Moghul rulers as no better than plundering ruffians. Akbar was the first

Moghul King who had succeeded in winning the approbation of the Hindus, in his capacity as a ruler. The most rigid and degrading slavery is moral and intellectual slavery, and Akbar's superior political instinct had taught him that he should aim at more than physical conquest if he wanted to lay the foundation of an empire in India.

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## CHAPTER III.

### AKBAR (1556-1605).

Akbar ruled over Hindusthan for nearly half a century and was the true founder of the Moghul empire in India. After the battle of Panipat on the 5th of November, 1556, the young king of thirteen years became ruler over the north-west portion of India. In 1558, the year of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne of England, Akbar took up his quarters in the old fort of Badalgarh at Agra. Two years later, he took the reins of government into his own hands from his tutor and regent Bairam Khan who was Humayun's sister's husband. In 1562 Akbar married the daughter of Raja Behari Mal of Amber (modern Jaipur) and made the Raja a general of 5000 horses. He also allowed the princess full freedom to observe the rites and ceremonies of her own Hindu faith. He married wives of various religious faiths and it is said that there were more than 5000 women in his harem.

A description of the Moghul harem has been given by Nur Jahan's father who was one of



Akbar the Great

Akbar's trusted ministers. The women were divided into small groups, and each group was commanded over by a woman selected for the purpose. Again, there was a woman selected for the command of all the groups together. The Chief Matron of the harem generally wielded great influence at Court. In the early years of Akbar's reign, his foster-mother, Maham Anga occupied this position. A separate room was allotted to women of higher rank and proper employment was assigned to everyone. Thus the whole harem looked like a busy beehive. The salaries varied according to the status of these women. Ladies of the first rank drew monthly allowance varying from Rs. 1000/- to Rs 1600/-. The ordinary servants received wages which varied from Rs. 2/- to Rs 51/- per month according to the nature of the work entrusted to them. The treasurer of the harem had also instructions to supply them with their necessaries according to rank. There were strong guards in and about the harem and any indiscreet conduct was pnnished with death. Women guards were posted in the inside of the harem, while eunuchs kept watch at the outer gate. Women of proved fidelity were appointed to guard the royal apartments and were very highly paid. Sometimes

decent Jaigirs were conferred upon special favourites of the emperors in the latter part of the Moghul rule and these Jaigirs were managed by the State on behalf of these women.

The most striking feature of Akbar's reign was his deep and abiding confidence in his Hindu officers like Bhagwan Das, Man Singh and Todar Mal. He knew that they were a great asset to the empire, not only as trustworthy generals but also as able administrators. In the course of the first twenty years of his reign, Akbar made himself master of practically the whole of Northern India, from Kandahar to Bengal, down to the Narbada in the South. All this was achieved with the voluntary help of Hindu rulers, since Akbar's conquests were always followed by good administration. The land revenue system that was introduced by Todar Mal, an able Rajput financier, recognised the cultivator as the owner of the soil and he was required to pay one-third of the produce to the State, the other two-thirds being retained by himself. Even at this rate, the income from land revenue alone on the year of Akbar's death in 1605 was somewhere in the neighbourhood of thirty Crores of rupees.

Akbar, as a man, was deeply sensitive to all forms of religious faith and he abolished the tax on Hinhu pilgrims as he thought it was wrong to put any hindrance in the way of a man's religious practices. He himself went on an annual pilgrimage to the great Saint's tomb at Ajmer, worshipped the Sun and the sacred fire like the Parsis, and had *Havan* performed within the precincts of his palace. He listened to the doctrines of Christian missionaries and ordered a translation of the Bible. He had great reverence for Hindu Yogis and loved to discuss the various systems of Hindu philosophy with them. Akbar gave up meat under the influence of Jain teachers who were given a hearty welcome to his court. In accordance with the Parsi custom, a sacred fire was kept burning at his court at all hours of the day. Christian fathers were invited from Goa to enlighten him on the tenets of Christianity. He had great reverence for the Granth Sahib and for the Sikh Gurus. Above all, he was greatly influenced by the mystic doctrines of the Sufis, which he learnt from Faizi, the poet, and Abdul Fazl, the scholar. Akbar hated forms and ceremonial rites and his new religion "Divine Faith" revealed elements of truth contained in Islam, Hinduism

and Christianity. Akbar was a frugal eater and took only one meal a day. He ate very little meat and gave it up completely during the latter part of his life. He slept little during the night and was an early riser. The day was spent in transacting the business of the State ; and the various discussions on philosophy, poetry, history and politics were carried far into the night. He owed very little to learning, but he could give a very scholarly solution of the most difficult problems on any subject. He was a great lover of sports and chased the wild tiger all alone through the thickest of the forest. He plunged, man and horse, into the Ganges in full flood and swam across to the opposite shore. His feats remind us of Julius Caesar leaping into the "angry flood" of "the troubled Tiber chafing with her shores" on a "raw and gusty day", and buffeting the roaring torrent with "lusty sinews."

The last days of Akbar were not happy. His two sons, Murad and Danyal died of excessive drinking. His eldest son, Salim, was practically a rebel and proclaimed himself king at Allahabad in 1602. By the death of Faizi in 1595, Akbar had lost one of his most valued friends and his

grief knew no bounds when Prince Salim caused the murder of Abul Fazl in 1602. His death was hastened by the intrigues within his own family circle. In October, 1605, Akbar died in the fort of Agra at the age of 65 years—two years after the death of Queen Elizabeth in England.

## CHAPTER IV.

### JAHANGIR (1605—1628.)

On Akbar's death, Jahangir was crowned at Agra in October, 1605, the same year that the Gunpowder plot was detected in England. Two years after, he married the grand-daughter of Raja Man Singh of Jaipur. In 1608, the year of Milton's birth, he took in hand the completion of his father's tomb at Sikandra. In the meantime, the people of England had heard of the name and fame of Akbar as a wise and liberal ruler. More than a century ago, Vasco da Gama had landed at Calicut in 1498 and Indian trade had by the beginning of the seventeenth century passed into the hands of the Portuguese from those of the Mohammadans. The Dutch had already come to India by the end of the 16th century and the first East India Company was formed in 1600. In 1612, English factories were established at Surat and Indian foreign trade came under the control of the English. About the same time, European travellers began to pour



Nur Jahan.





into India. William Hawkins had already come to Agra in 1609 and had access to Jahangir's court. He was a sailor and could speak Turkish. He soon became very intimate with the emperor, as he could drink level with Jahangir, the "talented drunkard." He married an Armenian lady and was addressed by the emperor with the title of 'Inglis Khan.' Hawkins observes that the emperor's yearly income at this time was fifty Crores of rupees. There were 500 drinking cups, each made from a single piece of ruby. There were 300 elephants for the emperor's personal use only. The emperor was very fond of watching elephant-fights and sports between men and wild animals. He generally got up at early dawn and said his prayers. He then appeared at the Darshan Darwaza, and after some sleep and dinner, retired to his women. He held his Durbar from noon till 3 P. M. and heard all complaints.

After having repeated his afternoon prayer, he took his meal and drank several cupfuls of strong wine. Then after taking opium, he went to sleep. At about 1 o'clock at night he was awakened and his supper was somehow or other thrust into his mouth. He then slept till morning.

Sir Thomas Roe came to India in 1615, as the ambassador of King James I of England. The English traders occupied a very humiliating position in India in those days. "Englishmen" says Lane-Poole, "were flouted, robbed, arrested, even whipped in the streets."

Sir Thomas Roe was a scholar, a critic, a merchant and a true Elizabethan courtier. He was sent out to India to redress all those wrongs which Englishmen suffered in India in those days. Both Jahangir and his son, Shah Jahan, who was governor of Surat at that time, acknowledged the manly dignity of Roe and granted him as many privileges as any stranger could hope to secure. Jahangir grew as familiar with him as he was with Hawkins and chatted with him for hours over his cups.

At this time Nur Jahan was all in all in the State and the empire was practically governed by her. However, she was very kind to all who sought her support and distributed charity with an open hand. All went well until she tried to secure the succession for prince Shahriyar, the emperor's youngest son, who had married Nur Jahan's daughter by a former husband. Shah Jahan who was the best general of his

time, rose in rebellion, but being defeated, made his submission. At this time Mahabat Khan was the commander of the army and naturally wielded great influence in the State. He was Nur Jahan's only rival and so she was bent upon depriving him of both life and living, if he refused to give over to her the control of the army. When things came to such a pass, Mahabat Khan cleverly imprisoned the emperor at an unguarded moment. Nur Jahan rode at the head of the emperor's army and put up a tough fight, but was defeated. She however, effected the escape of Jahangir by her shrewd intelligence and won over the army to her side. Mahabat now went and joined Shah Jahan. But Jahangir died soon afterwards in his sixtieth year and the whole machination of Nur Jahan fell through. Prince Shahriyar was put to death and Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1628 with the help of Mahabat and his father-in-law, Asaf Khan. Nur Jahan put on her mourning clothes and retired into private life. She died at Lahore in 1646, eighteen years after the death of her husband.

(One of the greatest calamities which befell India about the middle of Jahangir's reign was

the Plague which began in the Punjab and spread over Delhi and Agra, carrying away thousands, both rich and poor.)



Shah Jahan the Magnificent
( The Builder of the Taj )





Mumtaz Mahal
( The Lady of the Taj )

## CHAPTER V

# SHAH JAHAN

## 1628-1658

We have already mentioned how in 1628 Shah Jahan was proclaimed emperor at Agra through the efforts of his father-in-law, Asaf Khan and the great Moghul general, Mahabat Khan. In his early youth Shah Jahan was so grave and serious by nature, that his father Jahangir advised him to take to drinking. He was the son of Jodhabai, a daughter of the Rana of Jodhpur. The sternness of his nature gradually mellowed down after his accession to the throne; and after the death of his wife, Mumtaz in 1630, he became quite a changed man. He was the most popular and yet the most magnificent of all the Moghul emperors. He was liberal towards the Hindus and tolerant towards the Christians. Mandelslo who was at Agra during Shah Jahan's reign, observes that it was the most splendid city of India at that time, with wide, paved streets and flourishing trade. Fine lodgings were provided to foreign traders and there were public baths scattered all over the city. The population was

*so large that two lakhs of fighting men could be* easily raised at a short notice. The artillery, field pieces and gun-powder were India's own manufacture and were as old in their origin as those made in any country in Europe. Agra was the capital of Babar and Akbar, while Shah Jahan laid the foundation of a new city after his own name, called Shahjahanabad in 1639. He, however, did not abandon Agra, as Akbar had left Fatehpur Sikri. During the latter part of his life, Shah Jahan lived mostly in his newly-built city except in summer which was spent in the valleys of Ajmer or Kashmir. Splendid marble buildings of Shah Jahan are still standing by the side of lake Anasagar at Ajmer. As years rolled on, the emperor grew fond of luxury and ease; and as the burden of State was a great hindrance to the enjoyment of the delights of the eye which he had cultivated, he pined for relief.

In 1657, Shah Jahan fell sick at Delhi and was believed to be dying. Dara at once assumed the reins of government and took the emperor to Agra, as the imperial treasures were still kept there. Each of the four sons of the emperor wanted to secure the throne for himself. It is interesting to note that it was exactly at this

*time that the English crown was offered to and* declined by Cromwell.

Shuja was governor of Bengal, Murad was viceroy at Ahmedabad and Aurangzeb was in command of the imperial forces in the Deccan. They all advanced towards Agra with their armies and ultimately the field was won by Aurangzeb at Fatehabad with the help of Murad in 1658.

Shah Jahan wanted to meet Aurangzeb after his victory, but the latter sent his son, Muhammad who made the old emperor virtually a prisoner within the fort of Agra. He was never allowed to leave the place even for a day for the rest of his life. Of course, Aurangzeb kept himself concealed from the sight of his father all through the years that he kept him captive.

But Aurangzeb's rivals were still at large. Murad was a valiant soldier, but a drunkard and a tool in the hands of Aurangzeb. He was made dead drunk by crafty Aurangzeb, imprisoned and at last put to death after three years. Dara was declared an apostate and done to death in 1659. Shuja was hunted away to the hills after a fresh defeat, and there he perished.

Aurangzeb was formally crowned in 1659. A year before this, Cromwell had died in England and Charles II was soon after restored to the throne in 1660.

Aurangzeb appointed Shaista Khan as the Governor of Agra Fort in which the worn and deposed emperor was kept in close captivity. All the gates of the Fort were walled up and the palace of Shah Jahan was kept under a strict guard. Harem women were the only companions of the unhappy emperor at this time. All his trusted counsellors had accepted office under Aurangzeb. Muhammad Sultan, the eldest son of Aurangzeb, was employed to keep a strict watch over his grand-father, while an unbroken relay of guards baffled all the efforts of the infirm, old man to regain his liberty. No one was allowed to see him without Aurangzeb's written order to Muhammad Sultan. He was not allowed to carry on any private correspondence with anybody. All his letters were open to inspection by Aurangzeb's men. All hopes of Shah Jahan to regain his power, were now shattered. But his love of pomp and luxury still lingered on. His health gradually declined, and he frequently spoke to Jahanara, his daughter, nurse and

companion in one, of his approaching death. His time was spent chiefly in reading the Quran and in repeating the prayer at all the prescribed hours. Monday, the 22nd of January, 1666, was the day when Shah Jahan breathed his last, wept over by his loving daughter, Jahanara and the ladies of the harem. He did not lose his consciousness even to the last moment but uttered words of consolation to the sobbing ladies and attendants. And then, as the shades of evening began to fall and his vitality sank lower and lower, he beckoned Jahanara to raise and support his head in an inclined position, and as he cast a longing, lingering look on the tomb of his beloved Mumtaz Begum, he sank down to rise no more.

Jahanara was a pious old maid and had shared her father's long captivity, during which she had entreated Shah Jahan again and again to forgive Aurangzeb; and it was due to her that the enraged father could be induced, only a few days before his death, to sign a pardon in favour of his erring son and the usurper of his throne.

Shah Jahan had breathed his last in the Musamman Burj and his parting message to

Jahanara was to see that his remains were buried by the side of Mumtaz whom he loved so dearly. The corpse was removed to the adjoining hall and enclosed in a sandal-wood coffin, while preparations were set afoot for burial the next morning. Shah Jahan on his death-bed had directed how his funeral should be celebrated, and Jahanara was anxious that the solemn ceremony should be conducted with "the officers of State carrying the coffin on their shoulders; all the rich men and nobles of Agra and its environs, and all the scholars, theologians and popular leaders of the capital, walking beside the bier with bare heads and feet; the common people in their tens of thousand, forming the rear of the procession; gold and silver being scattered on both sides every now and then as they moved on." But the whole scheme had to be abandoned, as Aurangzeb neither arrived in person nor sent any instructions. The coffin was quietly conveyed to the Taj, in a boat, over the river, and the earthly remains of Shah Jahan the Magnificent, were buried beside those of Mumtaz in a most humiliating and niggardly style.

Aurangzeb arrived at Agra in February, 1666, and made Jahanara the chief lady of the

court on the eve of his Coronation. It was near about this time that the Great Plague and the Great Fire broke out in London and the London Gazette was first issued. Milton's Paradise Lost was also published a year after the death of Shah Jahan. Jahanara died in 1681—fifteen years after the death of her father, and ten years after the death of her younger sister, Princess Raushanara who had rendered Aurangzeb tremendous help in the War of Succession. The two sisters stood poles apart so far as their sense of duty towards their father was concerned.

All that Aurangzeb did to expiate his sins against his departed king and father was to enclose the tombs of his parents with a delicately carved marble screen which is one of the best specimens of the artistic susceptibility of the age.

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## AURANGZEB

### 1659—1707.

Aurangzeb came to the throne by the law of the survival of the fittest. His eldest brother, Dara, had no title to the crown as the Mohammadans do not acknowledge the law of primogeniture. It is the faithful who should inherit the throne, irrespective of every other consideration. It was therefore necessary for Aurangzeb, after his extremely inhuman treatment of his father and brothers to come forward as the greatest champion of Islam. After securing the throne with the help of mean and cruel intrigues, he pretended as if sovereignty had been thrust upon him by God, in order that he might carry out the religious reforms so badly needed at the time. It is said that "his imperial robe of state thinly veiled the Dervish's frock that he wore beneath it." He kept fasts, ate no animal food and drank nothing but water. He often slept on the ground by way of penance. He knew the whole of the Quran by heart. He was respected by all for his puritanic habits, but never really loved, because of his suspicious nature. He trusted neither his

officials nor his sons. His eldest son, Muhammad Sultan was kept confined in the State prison of Gwalior. The emperor sometimes sent artists to take his son's portrait, in order to ascertain how his prisoner fared.

During the time of Aurangzeb, Delhi was the chief capital, although the emperor very frequently came to Agra and held his court there.

In May, 1666, Shivaji, now 40 years old, was induced by Raja Jai Singh and his son, Kumar Ram Singh to pay a visit to Aurangzeb's court at Agra. Raja Jai Singh was a famous ruler of Jaipur and a trusted general of the emperor. Perfect safety was promised to Shivaji while he remained at the imperial capital. Accompanied by his son, Shambhuji, he arrived at the Dewani-am at the time when the emperor's birthday was being celebrated. Grandeur and solemnity prevailed all round. Shivaji was introduced to the emperor by Kumar Ram Singh but was not received as warmly as he had expected. He felt sorely grieved at heart and made loud complaints against such mean reception, within the hearing of the emperor. He took out his sword and was going to put an end to his life on the spot. A sensation

was thus created in the court; and being overpowered with wrath and indignation, Shivaji dropped down unconscious. He was taken away from the hall and placed in charge of Ram Singh in Jaipur House at Agra, virtually a prisoner. A strong guard was planted round the house, and all hopes of escape were at an end. Luckily his life was spared by the emperor through the intercession of Raja Jai Singh and his son. All his protests to the emperor failed to bring him liberty; and the louder he protested, the firmer grew the hoops of bondage.

Now the time came when Shivaji protested no more. He knew that the only way to extricate himself from the clutches of the wily emperor was by a stratagem. Himself an adept in this art, he could outdo Aurangzeb in craftiness when the occasion demanded it. He pretended to be affected with heart-trouble and began to send presents of sweetmeats in baskets of enormous size to holy priests and Brahmins, with a view to propitiate his evil stars. One August evening, when the sky was overcast with clouds and a pleasant shower was expected every moment, the soft, cool breeze sent a happy thrill through the hearts of the emperor's unwary guards, grown overconfident through

their royal prisoner's resignation, Shivaji made good his escape in one of the huge baskets and took the road to Muttra, disguised as a *Sadhu.* After a long and circuitous journey through Benares and Puri, he reached home after an absence of nearly ten months and surprised his pining mother with his sudden and unexpected re-appearance in the garb of a mendicant. On his return to the Deccan, Shivaji took up the work of conquest with redoubled activity, but his meteoric career was cut short by his sudden death in 1680.

Now let us return to Aurangzeb. He was entirely free from the vices and luxuries of kings and even denied himself the most innocent pleasures. He was very faithful to his wives, the chief among whom were the Aurangabadi Begum and the Udaipuri Begum.

Having finally secured the throne to himself after his father's death, Aurangzeb proceeded to Delhi which continued to be the chief capital till 1682. After this, the seat of government was shifted to Ahmedabad, Burhanpur and other places in the Deccan.

His suspicious nature made Aurangzeb extremely unhappy in private life and he always

feared lest he should meet the same fate in his old age as his father had endured through him.

We may note here that while Aurangzeb was steadily pursuing a policy of self-aggrandisement in India, the Greenwich Observatory was founded in England (1675), the Telegraphs were invented (1687), the Bank of England was incorporated (1694) and St. Paul's Cathedral was opened ( 1697 ). The Fort William of Calcutta was also founded the following year ( 1698 ), which was only eight years after Charnock had received at Sutanuti a grant of land from Aurangzeb and laid the foundation of Calcutta which was made the capital of a Presidency in 1707—the same year that the emperor gave up the ghost at the good old age of eighty-nine. It is interesting to note that at the time of Shah Jahan's death, the income of the Moghul empire from land revenue was rupees forty-six Crores which grew up by leaps and bounds to rupees sixty-five Crores during the latter part of Aurangzeb's reign.

Aurangzeb very often declared that the art of governing was so delicate that the king must suspect his own shadow. In spite of the fact that he loved his sons, he kept them all away

from his side, lest they should treat him in the same manner in his old age as he had treated his father. He dragged on a solitary existence, lived unloved and died unwept. His dying words were that his life had been a great failure as he had done no good either to the country or its people. "Let no useless coffin enclose my breast", said he, "and let no structure be raised over my grave." And his wishes were duly fulfilled. All the great Moghul Emperors have their tombs, but Aurangzeb has none.

The Moghul emperors from the time of Akbar to that of Aurangzeb, were the most powerful monarchs of their own times, wielding more authority over their subjects than did any other royal potentate of the age. Even the weal or woe of the private lives of the people depended upon the humour of their rulers.

But this sovereignty of the almighty Moghul was not to last for ever. In 1681 Aurangzeb was compelled to go south to carry on the Deccan Wars, and the Northern provinces, including the Agra province, were gradually drained of their financial and military resources. Owing to the insufficiency of troops in the capital and the rich cities of the north, robber

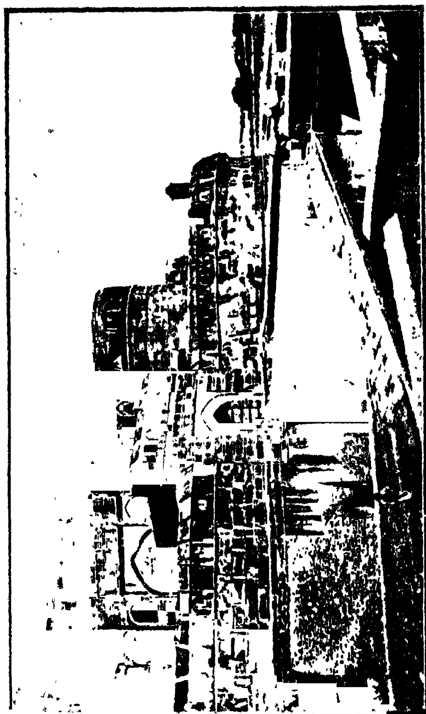
tribes began to assert themselves and the prestige of the all-powerful Moghul was on the wane. It was at this time, during the absence of Aurangzeb and his trusted generals in the Deccan, that Agra and its suburbs suffered terribly at the hands of the Jats, led by their daring chief, Rajaram. Manucci describes how in the year 1688, the Jats plundered Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, under the leadership of Rajaram. "They began their pillage by breaking in the great gates of bronze which it had, robbing the valuable precious stones and plates of gold and silver, and destroying what they were not able to carry away. Dragging out the bones of Akbar, they threw them angrily into the fire and burnt them."

Rajaram's nephew, Churaman, founded a new line of rulers at Bharatpur which is still occupying the dignified position of a faithful ally of the British with whom it lay to bring together and ably control the various heterogeneous elements of India, after all the vicissitudes and troubles through which she had passed during the dismemberment of the Moghul Empire in India.

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# PART III

## Five Gems of Moghul Architecture



# CHAPTER I.

## THE AGRA FORT.

In 1565, a year after the birth of Shakespeare, Akbar started building the Fort in the ninth year of his reign. It was completed in 1574—three years after the Harrow School had been established. The construction was made under the supervision of Qasim Khan as the chief architect at a cost of rupees thirty-five lacs. Several additions have been made since the time of Akbar, by Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. It was built on the ruins of the old fort named Badalgarh which had been partially reconstructed by the Lodi Kings.

The Fort stands on the right bank of the Jumna and the exterior walls look almost semi-circular in shape, the whole circuit being about a mile and a half. The double wall and the four gates of red sandstone are the same to-day as they were in Akbar's time. The outer wall is forty feet high and the inner one seventy feet. There were two ditches round the fort, the outer one of which, 25 feet wide, has dis-

appeared. The inner ditch which still exists, is thirty feet wide and was made by Aurangzeb. The two most prominent bastions which stand facing the river at the northern and southern extremities, are known as the Shah Burj and the Bangali Burj respectively.

Of the four gateways, the most imposing one is the Delhi gate on the North-west, with a massive tower on either side and ornamented with inlaid marble work of a beautiful design. There is an inner gateway reached by a sloping ascent up the drawbridge and is known generally by the name of Hathi Pol or Elephant Gate and is said to have been erected in commemoration of Akbar's victory over two Rajput heroes of Chitor, namely Jaimal and Fateh Singh who offered the emperor a very tough fight in the defence of their mother-land. Two elephant statues which once stood over this gateway, and after which the gate took its name, have now disappeared. To the right of this gate there is an inscription showing that Akbar took up his residence in this fort in 1600. The outer entrance leading to the massive structure of the Elephant Gate is also called the Delhi Gate. By the year 1574 both

the forts of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri had been completed and the latter continued to be the royal abode till the year 1585. From 1586 to 1599 the seat of government was Lahore, after which Akbar returned to Agra and lived in the fort until his death in 1605. The Naubat Khana was located at the top of the Delhi Gate, and music was played whenever the emperor passed through the gate on his elephant.

The Amar Singh gate stands at the Southern extremity of the fort and leads to the spacious court-yard in front of the Dewan-i-am. The whole structure of this gate was at one time covered with brightly glazed tiles of blue enamel. It is not clear why the gate was named after a Rajput. Some say that Amar Singh was a Rajput Chief who was beheaded in the Darbar of Shah Jahan in 1644. Another version says that a Rajput adventurer by the name of Amar Singh rose to rank and position in Jahangir's court with the help of an old courtier who sought the hand of the young and beautiful daughter of Amar Singh in marriage. Importunities having failed, the old man out of sheer revenge approached Jahangir with the fame of the maiden's beauty and implored him to acquire her for the royal

harem. One evening the house of Amar Singh was raided by the emperor's men, and seeing no way of escape, the desperate father stabbed his daughter to death. He immediately took horse, rode straight to the Fort and demanded an explanation from the emperor. He was however, at once secured by the imperial guards and cut up then and there under orders from the emperor. The gate through which he came to seek his retribution and then met his well-deserved death, was named the Amar Singh Gate, to commemorate the emperor's wrath against all such rash and impudent knaves as had the audacity to raise a finger of revolt against the imperial will.

There is still another version which says that this Amar Singh was no other than the eldest of Rana Pratap's seventeen sons, who had ascended the throne in 1597. In 1599 Akbar directed Prince Salim and Raja Man Singh to invade Mewar. But the expedition proved unsuccessful and Akbar concluded a truce with Amar Singh in 1603. On his accession to the throne, Jahangir sent a large force against the Rana of Mewar, which ultimately ended in a truce between the Rajputs and the Moghuls. In 1608 the emperor sent another force against

the Rana under the command of Mahabat Khan who compelled the Rajputs to fly for shelter to the hills and jungles. Other expeditions were sent against Amar Singh from time to time, but the brave Rajputs remained unconquered. In 1613 Jahangir transferred his court to Ajmer and appointed Prince Khurram to lead the expedition. In 1614 the Prince marched at the head of a large army and reduced Amar Singh to a miserable plight. Negotiations were opened for peace in which the Rana agreed to acknowledge the Moghul supremacy. Chitor was restored to the Rana, but he was ordered never to fortify or repair it. Jahangir's joy knew no bounds at the submission of the great Rana of Mewar whom Akbar had failed to bring under his control. Jewelled swords and daggers, horses and elephants were presented to the Rana under instructions from Jahangir, and it was on this occasion that the emperor named the gate leading to the Dewan-i-am, after Amar Singh, to commemorate his victory over the invincible Rana of Mewar and had his life-size statue on horseback placed below the Darshan Darwaza at Agra, along with that of the Rana's heir-apparent, Kunwar Karan Singh

who had fought so well in Mewar's struggle for life and liberty.

The Water Gate, now closed entirely, is situated in the centre of the base facing the river and was formerly used as a passage for boats coming into the fort through the ditch around, which was joined to the river. The waterway provided an easy access from the Fort to the Taj Mahal along the breast of the Jumna.

There was a fourth gate just under the Jasmine Tower which was used by the populace when they came to have Darshan of the Emperor. The gate was walled up by Aurang-zeb when he made Shah Jahan a captive inside the Fort.

The Moghul emperors, as we know, thought it highly expedient to be seen by their subjects every morning at the Darshan Darwaza, to remove any likelihood of the spread of false rumours of their death through intrigues in the palace, and consequent dislocation of government. We must remember that such wild rumours were not an unusual feature of the Moghul rule in India.

## THE DEWAN-I-AM.
## OR
## HALL OF PUBLIC AUDIENCE.

The Dewan-i-am is an extensive hall built of red sandstone, with a big enclosure in front, measuring 500 ft. by 370 ft. The Hall itself was meant for the accommodation of nobles, chiefs and officers ; while the enclosure below was thronged by the common people who came from all parts of the kingdom with their petitions to be submitted to the emperor. The whole place was covered with men, elephants, horses, camels and bullock-carts and the scene might well be compared with that in modern law-courts in important Indian cities. Anxiety sat in the face of both the culprit and the defendant, since everything lay at the whim or mercy of the emperor. The strict observance of codes of law, either in cases of civil or criminal procedure, was conspicuous by its absence. Perfect silence was maintained while the emperor was holding his court and breach of court etiquette was punished very severely.

This hall was originally built by Akbar in the latter part of his reign when he was permanently

residing at Agra, but several additions and alterations were made during the time of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

The marble gallery of three arches for the emperor's throne, with the windows of lattice-work on either side for the ladies to watch the proceedings of the court were added by Shah Jahan ; while the credit of covering the pillars, arches and ceiling with white stucco plaster and adorning them with fine lines of golden paint, goes to Aurangzeb who is also said to have made some alterations in the design of the pillars and arches which have a beauty of their own.

There is a large slab of marble beneath the throne gallery from which the grand vizier presented to the emperor the petitions of the public and conveyed His Majesty's decisions in turn. It was formerly fenced round with silver railings.

It was in this Hall that Shivaji visited Aurangzeb in 1666, the year of the Great Fire of London. Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur, a renowned general of the Moghul army, was entrusted with the task of sending Shivaji to Aurangzeb's court at Agra. He and his son, Kumar Ram Singh who was his father's agent at the capital, assured Shivaji that he would not be harmed in any way

by the emperor. Shivaji reached Agra on the 9th of May, attended by his son Shambhuji, seven officers and a retinue of 4000 men. At the time of starting, he was presented with a lac of rupees for the expenses of his journey. The day appointed for his audience with the emperor was the 12th of May, which was the emperor's birthday, and the Dewan-i-am shone with exquisite splendour. The enclosure below was decorated with rich canopies and all things looked bright and gay. Shivaji was led by Kumar Ram Singh to the foot of the imperial throne and then asked to retire to a place reserved for commanders of 5000 or third-grade nobles. Shivaji felt so much humiliated that he was on the point of committing suicide with his sword on the very spot and was only prevented by Ram Singh. Due to rage and indignation at the poor treatment accorded to him by the emperor, he fell into a swoon and was subsequently removed, on his recovering his senses, to Jaipur House, at a distance of about 2 miles from the Fort and was placed under the custody of Ram Singh. A strong guard was posted round the House, under orders from the Emperor, and Shivaji was practically made a prisoner. About three months passed in this way; until at last, he made

his escape by a stratagem which has been related already.

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## THE MINA BAZAR.

It was built by Akbar for the use of the ladies of the court. Only women dealers were allowed to sell their goods here. Sometimes the wives of princes and nobles took the place of common dealers and sold their flimsy articles and trinkets to the emperor and the ladies of the palace at exorbitant prices. None of the male sex except the emperor was allowed to come within the four walls of this Fancy Bazar. The Building is an unassuming structure of red sandstone with open apartments for the dealers, but has very pleasant memories connected with it. During the Nauroz festival the ladies plied very good trade here. What with smart repartees and word-combats, sly hints and pleasant gestures, the place was filled with a holiday halo and splendour which could not be met with elsewhere within the walls of the Fort. It is said that once a piece of sugar-candy was represented by a fair lady to be a piece of diamond and was sold far a lac of rupees.

It is related of Akbar that he once forgot himself so far as to run after the beautiful wife of

his court poet, Prithviraj, the younger brother of the Raja of Bikaner. The lady herself was the daughter of Sakta Singh, a near relation of Rana Pratap of Mewar. She managed to escape this dishonourable assault and ran horrified from the Mina Bazar to the ladies of the court for protection. The incident created such a sensation that Akbar never attended the Mina Bazar for the rest of his life. Prithviraj left the emperor's court in disgust and all the Rajput nobles took the assault as an insult offered to the noble womanhood of Rajputana. This inglorious event has left a blot on the pure and attractive personality of Akbar.

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## THE MOTI MASJID
## OR
## THE PEARL MOSQUE.

This splendid mosque, the best of its kind in the whole of Asia, was commenced by Shah Jahan in 1647, the nineteenth year of his reign and was completed in 1654—when the British Commonwealth was supreme in England—at a cost of three lacs of rupees. The outside walls are built of red sandstone, while the interior is

made up entirely of marble. The walls measure 234 ft. from east to west, and 187 ft. from north to south. The spacious court in front of the mosque is also paved with marble, with a beautiful central tank, 37 ft. square, which reflects the image of the mosque within its bosom. The interior of the mosque which is 142 ft. by 56ft., is divided into three parts by rows of pillars on which rest the magnificent arches and the three domes of white marble, which look like silver bubbles from a distance. On either side of the mosque there are separate chambers for the ladies of the court, which are screened off by marble lattice-work. The white floor of the mosque is inlaid with yellow marble and there is a Persian inscription on the front arch in black; otherwise the whole structure gives the impression of pure white, in and out, above and below.

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## JAHANGIR'S CISTERN OR BATH.

Within the spacious court of the Jahangiri Mahal there is an enormous stone bowl hewn out of a single block, 8 ft. in diameter and 4 ft. 9 in. high, which was used by Jahangir as his bath and was constructed in the year 1610.

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# THE DEWAN-I-KHAS
# OR
# HALL OF PRIVATE AUDIENCE.

It is an exquisite work of art, erected by Shah Jahan in 1637, by the side of the Jumna during the same time that the Taj was a-building. The artistic marvels of Persian style—the flower-beds, the flowers, the twisted leaves and branches—are so tender and delicate that one can clearly see here the hand of the architects of the Taj which was begun in 1631 and completed in 1648. The building consists of two halls and measures 65 ft. long and 34 ft. wide. It is made of white marble and the beautiful carving and artistic inlaid work places it among the best architectural productions of the age. One of the arches towards the river-side of the Dewan-i-Khas was struck by a shell from the cannon of Lord Lake in 1803 and was partly broken. Its marble flooring is said to have been dug out and carried away by the Jats.

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# THE MACHHI BHAWAN
# OR
# FISH PALACE.

It is situated at the back of the Dewan-i-am and is connected with it by a communicating door. It consists of a courtyard measuring 200 ft. by 150 ft., which is surmounted by a roofed gallery in the upper storey. on the north, west and south. On the east there is a terrace in front of the Dewan-i-Khas, and there is reason to believe that formerly it had marble roof which was broken down and the marble carried off to Dig and Bharatpur by the Jats as building material for their own palaces. The place is known as Machhi Bhawan, as during the time of the Moghul emperors there were tanks of marble for the fish in the courtyard below, to which water was conveyed by artificial channels from the Jumna. These tanks were carried off by Raja Suraj Mal of Bharatpur. They were filled with gold fishes which provided merry sport to the Emperor and the Zenana of the palace. A faint idea of the Machhi Bhawan at Agra may be gathered from the existing one at Lucknow.

On the terrace or raised platform in front of the Dewan-i-Khas are placed two thrones, one of black slate and the other of white marble, the former having been used by Jahangir at Allahabad in 1602 as his own royal seat when he rebelled against his father. We are told that Akbar subsequently became reconciled with his son and invested him with the full powers of an emperor before his death.

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## THE NAGINA MASJID

## OR

## THE GEM MOSQUE.

It was a private mosque, chiefly for the female worshippers of the palace and is connected with the Zenana by a screened passage along the roof of the Dewan-i-am. It is built of white marble with three domes supported by arches resting on rows of pillars. The place is certainly a secluded nook for devout worshippers and rightly deserves the name of Gem from the artistic taste it reveals in small miniature.

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# SAMAN BURJ

# OR

# JASMINE TOWER.

It is known both as Suman Burj, Jasmine Tower or Musamman Burj, Octagonal Tower. It was built by Shah Jahan for his beloved wife, Arjumand Banu, otherwise known as Mumtaz Mahal Begum. It was here that Shah Jahan closed his eyes in death in January, 1666, gazing steadfastly on the tomb of his beloved Arjumand—the Taj Mahal—visible at a distance of a mile down the Jumna. His dying eyes fed on the beauty of the Taj where was enshrined his once priceless possession on earth and whose memory he was cherishing with all the depth of his first love for the last 36 years. The Saman Burj is enclosed by highly artistic screens of marble, while the octagonal tower above, delicately inlaid with patterns of jasmine flower and overtopped by a cupola, greatly adds to the charm of its beautiful surroundings. In front of the Burj the pavement is made up into squares in coloured marble for the emperor to play the game of *pachisi* in which the women of of the harem were used as chess pieces. They

moved from point to point as the game proceeded, affording a fund of merriment and laughter to the emperor and the lovely women folk of the palace. This seems to have been one of the most favourite games of the Moghul emperors, as we come across the same sort of chessboard arrangement in the palace at Fatehpur Sikri also.

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## THE KHAS MAHAL.

The Khas Mahal was built by Shah Jahan in 1636, the eighth year of his reign. It is a beautiful block of three marble pavilions standing on an elevated platform on the side of the Jumna. The emperor with some of the chief ladies of the court used to reside here. The central pavilion measuring 70 ft. by 40 ft. is joined to the two side ones by means of doorways. The Burj mentioned above is separated from the side pavilion on the north by a marble screen. The walls which are elaborately carved in relief, are still seen in their original artistic grandeur but the beautiful golden painting on the ceilings has all disappeared. An idea of this Moghul painting with beautiful floral patterns in gold may be gathered from the part which was sought to be restored under the orders of Lord Curzon. The side

pavilion on the south was the residence of Shah Jahan's eldest daughter, Jahanara, who shared her father's captivity within the fort from 1658 to 1666. This palace contained the portraits of all the Moghul emperors by the most eminent artists, which were removed by Raja Suraj Mal of Bharatpur. On the space below, under the windows of the central hall of this palace, elephant-fights were held and culprits condemned to death were executed. Death sentences, however, were very rare then.

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## THE ANGURI BAGH
## OR
## VINEYARD.

It is situated in front of the Khas Mahal in a big courtyard measuring 235 ft. by 170 ft. It was made by Akbar for his harem women, with sets of chambers on three sides. The garden is laid out in artistic flower-beds with a central tank and fountain and is divided into four parts by means of pavements. It is said that the soil for the garden was brought from Kashmir for the purpose of growing luscious grapes for the imperial household.

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# THE SHISH MAHAL
# OR
# PALACE OF MIRRORS.

It is so named because the walls and ceilings of the two halls adjoining each other are covered with small fragments of looking-glass set in plaster and arranged in most beautiful designs. The reflection of light on these tiny pieces of looking-glass has a charming effect. Each one of these halls has a marble tank which was kept full to the brim without overflowing by an arrangement which has disappeared with the destruction of the Hammam or baths in the adjoining compartment, now closed. One of these tanks contained tepid water and the other cold water in which, and on the marble floor carved and inlaid with beautiful designs of fishes, over which rolled an unceasing current of water, giving them an appearance of living things, disported the emperor with his many wives; while the innumerable tiny lamps hanging from the ceiling, reflected their beams all around; and the fountains emitting fragrant water played with the locks of the lovely Begums whose well-shaped limbs, only partially revealed, were

reflected on the numberless mirrors from which the chamber takes its name.

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## THE TEH KHANA
## OR
## UNDERGROUND CHAMBERS.

Under the platform of the Khas Mahal there is a number of underground chambers, known as the Teh Khana, where the fair damsels of the court retired at noon from the terrible summer heat of Agra and passed the long hours of the day in pleasant jokes and merry-making. Some of these underground chambers were also used as cells for State offenders.

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## THE JAHANGIRI MAHAL
## OR
## THE PALACE OF JAHANGIR.

This two-storeyed structure was built by Akbar in the latter part of his reign and was the residence of Jodh Bai, Jahangir's Hindu wife. The bracket-shaped capitals supporting the stone beams, the absence of arches and the Hindu character of its architecture show how

widely it differs from other specimens of Moghul buildings at Agra and what a close affinity it bears to those at Fatehpur Sikri. The influence of the architecture of Jaipur and the neighbouring Rajput States is clearly visible in the construction of the lotus flowers with a pair of birds under them, and in the rich ornamentation of the exquisitely carved pillars of the Jahangiri Mahal. Situated at the south of the vineyard it occupies an area of about 260 ft. by 250 ft. The green and blue tiles above the balcony in the upper storey are in an excellent state of preservation and conclusively prove that glazed tiles of various colours were manufactured in India even in those far-off days. Some traces of the profuse colouring in gold can still be found in the interior of these buildings, but mostly they present a sombre look, and it is only the wealth of carved ornamentation and vastness of structure that throws a charm over the place. Akbar allowed freedom of worship even to the inmates of the harem and built a Hindu temple for Jodh Bai, which was subsequently demolished by Aurangzeb.

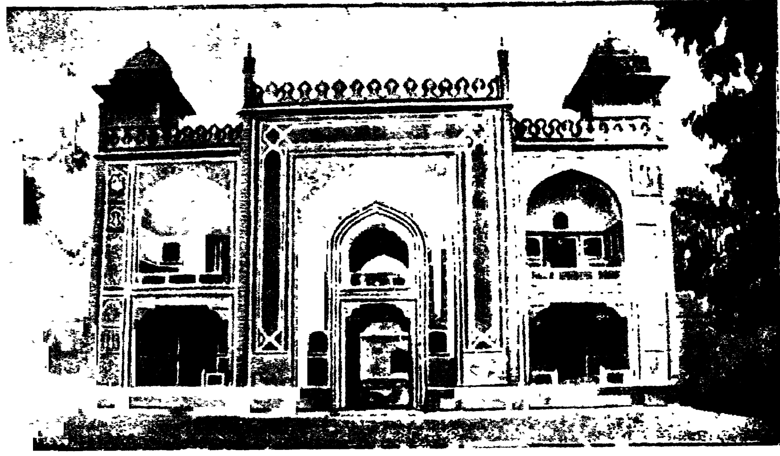
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CHAPTER II

# THE TOMB OF ETMAD-UD-DAULA.

The tomb of Etmad-ud-daulah is situated on the left bank of the Jumna. He was the father of Nur Jahan and rose to be the Prime Minister of Jahangir. He died in 1622 and the building was started the same year by his illustrious daughter. It was completed in 1628, the same year that Jahangir died and was buried at Lahore.

Etmad-ud-daula, otherwise known as Mirza Ghiasuddin Muhammad, was the son of a high official in Persia who had come in contact with Humayun during his sojourn to that country. Ghiasuddin's father was a cultured and learned man and had gradually risen to a high position. But the death of his father and the intrigues of the court brought on distress and despair, and Ghiasuddin was obliged to leave his country and seek his fortune elsewhere. He had heard of the fame of Akbar, the ruler of Hindustan, and so turned his steps thither with his wife, Asmat-ul-Nisa, his two sons and a daughter. While they were crossing the desert, they were in



The Tomb of Etmaduddaula

imminent danger of perishing through hunger and thirst. Their condition became still worse when, in this trying situation, the wife of the Mirza gave birth to a female child in the jungles of Kandahar. The story of Nur Jahan's birth has received a romantic setting at the hands of Muhammadan historians, which is given below.

At this time the distress of the family knew no bounds. They were all starving—they were nearly starved to death. The children were crying for food and both the husband and the wife felt much distressed at heart. There was no comfort to be found anywhere. Death, they knew, would end all their miseries and they prayed to God for death. But that much-coveted death did not come—it never comes to those who welcome it. Days passed, weeks followed and the distress of the good Mirza and his family had no prospect of being relieved.

The Mirza was not at all happy with the new-born baby—it was a great burden along the tedious journey to India—it was a great obstacle to their free movement. They must leave the child to perish in the jungle and proceed forward. But the mother—how could she leave the beautiful baby there in the woods ? The child

was born on a full-moon night and was as lovely as the moon. How to leave this lovely child in the very clutches of death ? She would never agree. But the Mirza was adamant. So, after a great altercation and much ruffling of spirits on either side, the child was left to the mercy of the Supporter and Preserver of all. They moved on with a heavy burden pressing on their hearts. The mother looked back from time to time to see the child she had cast away, and wiped tears of grief from her eyes, till at last she could see her no more. In her heart she dedicated the child to God.

A merchant with his caravan was passing that way, when he caught sight of a little baby over whom a huge serpent was holding its hood like an umbrella to keep out the sun from her face, and the child was laughing with glee. The merchant did not know what to do. He dared not molest the serpent lest it should bite the dear child. So he pondered a while and concluded that God must have sent the serpent there to protect the helpless child. He stood amazed, fixed to the spot, when, lo ! the serpent contracted its hood, turned sharply away and vanished in the twinkling of an eye. The kind-hearted merchant

advanced towards the child in great joy and took the soft and tender thing in his arms.

But now there was one great difficulty. The child was too young and needed careful nursing. The merchant looked hither and thither for a woman who could give her milk but could find none. So he fed the child for some days on camel's milk. But as luck would have it, he met the family of the Mirza himself, after crossing over to India. When the merchant had heard the whole story, he gave the child to its mother along with some money, predicting at the same time many great things about the child's future. The mother was filled with ecstasies of joy and praised God in the words quoted below, which have been preserved in all popular stories of Nur Jahan's birth. "O Lord, Thy mercy never leaves the helpless; Thou art the keeper of our honour. Thou makest no delay in showing mercy; so, oh ye seekers of mercy, be not despondent." The whole of this story reads like a romance, but the Persian chroniclers accept it as true to the letter.

The parents of Nur Jahan soon came over to India and the Mirza presented himself at Akbar's court at Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar saw that he was a man of parts and readily took him into

service. His learning, culture and administrative capacity helped him on to a high position in the State, while his youngest daughter whom Akbar used to call as Mehr-un-Nisa, had free access to the emperor's palace, and her dignified bearing, even at this early age, made her an object of attraction to all who saw her. Her intelligent talk very much pleased Akbar and he began to love her as his own daughter. She often visited the ladies of the harem with her mother and so attracted the notice of Jahangir who loved her company immensely.

The story goes that one day Jahangir was flying pigeons, while Mehr-un-Nisa stood watching. The prince gave her two pigeons and in loving words requested her to hold them fast for him. But suddenly one pigeon got loose and flew away. Jahangir was annoyed and asked her how the pigeon escaped. She held out the other bird, and as she let it away, told him in a soft voice that the bird had escaped in that manner. The prince was very much struck with the simplicity of the tender girl and from that moment began to love her in secret. She, in her heart, admired the prince's frank and open traits of character. This was the process. Soon however, Akbar came to learn that his son and heir

wanted to make the daughter of Mirza Ghiasuddin, a servant of the State, his wife. Akbar never approved of this match. He married her instead to Sher Afghan Khan and made him the ruler of Burdwan at the same time.

Jahangir could not forget Mehr-un-Nisa. So, as soon as he came to the throne in 1605, after Akbar's death, he sent his friend Qutb-uddin Khan who had succeeded Raja Man Singh as governor of Bengal in 1606, to Sher Afghan, with the express demand that he should divorce his wife, to leave the way open for the emperor to marry her. This being refused, Sher Afghan was murdered and Mehr-un-Nisa was sent as a prisoner to the emperor's palace at Agra. Another account says that Sher Afghan was torn to pieces by Qutb-uddin's retainers on account of his insubordination and rebellious spirit. He is also said to have been guilty of treason. The widow, however, was so much overpowered with grief and indignation, that she refused to see the face of Jahangir for six years and spent the whole time in mourning for her departed husband. Before this, Jahangir had already been married to Jodh Bai, daughter of Udai Singh, the Mota Raja, in 1586, and to other wives of various nationalities. At

last, after repeated inducements and entreaties from the emperor, she gave her consent and they were married in 1611, the year when the Authorised Version of the Bible was published. After the wedding, Jahangir changed her name as Nur Jahan or Light of the World. Her father was raised to the position of Prime Minister, which he continued to fill till his death in 1622.

Nur Jahan was all in all to Jahangir and it was she, and not her royal lord, who ruled the kingdom. At this time, the revenue derived by the State from land alone was nearly thirty crores of rupees a year.

But Nur Jahan had not forgotten the merchant who had saved her life in the jungles of Kandahar. She sent for him to the palace and gave him large sums of money. On his death a memorial was built for him at Kandahar at an enormous cost.

At first Nur Jahan wanted that the mausoleum of her father should be carved out of gold and silver. But she was told by the architects that marble would be more durable and also less liable to suffer from the ravages of thieves and plunderers.

The tomb of Etmad-uddaula has been spoken of as an architectural gem of the highest purity, in which both the mosaic and inlaid work have attained their loftiest perfection. The decorative work is similar to that exhibited in the Taj, as the Taj was begun only three years after this tomb had been completed.

The garden enclosure of the tomb measures 180 yds. each way, in the centre of which on a raised platform of red sandstone, 150 ft. square, stands the tomb proper, of the choicest white marble, with an octagonal tower at each of the four corners. The garden itself is enclosed by walls on three sides, while the fourth is left open unto the Jumna. The gate leading to the garden is a double-storeyed structure of red sandstone, artistically set in marble mosaic. Both the interior and exterior walls of the tomb are exquisitely ornamented with inlaid work, the beauty of which is really indescribable.

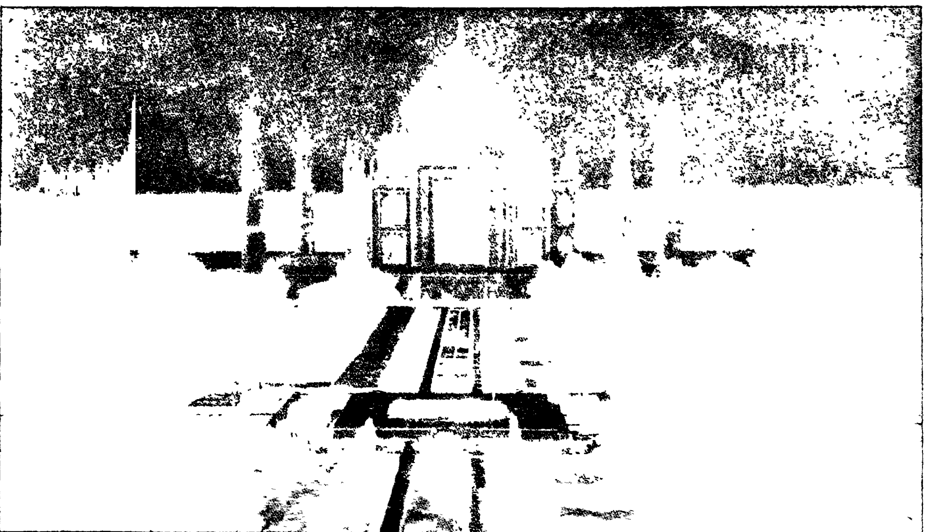
The cenotaphs of Etmad-ud-daula and his wife Asmat-ul-Nisa are made of Khattu or yellow stone and lie in the central chamber. There are other chambers surrounding the central one, where the remains of other members of

the family lie deposited, including those of Asaf Khan, father of Mumtaz Mahal and brother of Nur Jahan. ( As for Nur Jahan, she was buried at Lahore in 1646 close by the side of Jahangir's tomb. )

There is a marble pavilion above the central chamber, with its roof resting on twelve pillars which are joined to one another by means of beautifully-pierced marble screens.

The gold and silver paintings in the chambers had disappeared, but were partially restored by Lord Curzon in 1905 before the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to convey an idea of the original.

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Taj Mahal.

## CHAPTER III

## THE TAJ MAHAL.

Even those who have described the Taj, have made a confession that it is indescribable. Shah Jahan himself, the builder of the Taj, describes its tender beauty by saying that the nymphs of paradise love to rub off the dust of its threshold with their eye-lids. Again, remembering his beloved wife, he says that the sight of the Taj makes the pining heart heave forth melancholy sighs and moves even the planets to tears. It was love and love alone—soft, profound, heart-eating love—that impelled the royal lover to immortalise his beloved by rasing this noble edifice of marble which has been variously called "a dream," "an elegy," a "sigh of a broken heart,"—all expressing only a fraction of the deep emotion which rent that true lover's heart to pieces.

Shah Jahan was an emperor, but an ardent, vehement lover all the same; and his love for Arjumand was no less fervent than that of Romeo for Juliet. The Taj is "the most gorgeous romance of wedded love."

Lord Roberts in his "Forty-one Years in India" says :

"Neither words nor pencil could give to the most imaginative reader the slighest idea of the all-satisfying beauty and purity of this glorious conception. To those who have not already seen it, I would say—Go to India. The Taj alone is well worth the journey."

Professor Oscar Browning of Cambridge observes : "There are morningites and even-ingites, moonlighters and mid-dayers, but they are all agreed that the Taj is the one incomparable building in India and in the world.... See the Taj. It will fascinate you so as to deprive you of all power of laudatory expression and it will haunt you ever after till your dying day."

Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman asked his wife, when she had gone over the Taj, what she thought of the building. She replied that she could not tell him what she thought, as she did not know how to criticise such a building, but she could tell him what she felt. "I would die to-morrow to have such another over me."

Havell remarks that the Taj is "India's noble tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood."

The Taj Mahal acquires its name from Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan, whose remains lie buried here. Her original name was Arjumand Banu Begum and she was the daughter of Asaf Khan, son of Etmad-ud-daula and brother of Nur Jahan. Her mother's name was Diwanji Begum. On the death of Etmad-ud-daula, Jahangir raised Asaf Khan to the position of his prime minister. The family of Etmad-ud-daula was an exceptionally talented one, both in the male and in the female line. Both Nur Jahan and her niece captured the hearts of their royal lovers, which was due to something more than their physical charms alone. What, then, was the "witchcraft" they used? Sharp intelligence, feminine grace, benignity of heart and a high sense of womanly self-respect helped them to become sovereigns over a sovereign's heart. The charms of physical beauty wear off with passing years, but the superior charms of the head and the heart create a new fascination from hour to hour and captivate the mind with irresistible force. Jahangir was frivolous and was ruled by Nur Jahan. He acknowledged her superiority and felt happy that she was governing him as well as his subjects. Mumtaz Mahal was Shah Jahan's loving mistress, his comrade, his

counsellor. She inspired him to acts of charity and benevolence, brought him the message of real conjugal love which was divine in character, and filled his heart with mercy for the weak and the fallen. These teachings the emperor could never forget, and this is the reason why Shah Jahan cherished the memory of the beloved queen of his heart to the very hour of his death. On the 22nd of January, 1666, in the 75th year of his age, he passed away, as he sat reclining against the arms of his eldest daughter, Jahanara who had shared his captivity, gazing with steadfast and longing eyes on the Taj, the last resting-place of the treasured mistress of his heart, whose loss he had mourned for the last 36 years.

Arjumand Banu was born in 1592, and as she grew up, became well-versed in letters, painting and music. She had just passed her nineteenth year when Shah Jahan married her in 1612. She was one of the most accomplished girls in an age when Nur Jahan was the chief lady of the court which had received from her a fresh impetus towards the development of art and letters.

Shah Jahan spent eighteen years of happy married life, in the course of which Mumtaz

bore eight sons and six daughters, of whom seven survived her. Jahanara Begum was born in 1614; Dara, 1615; Shuja, 1616; Raushanara Begum, 1617; Aurangzeb, 1618; Murad, 1624 and the last, Gauharara Begum at Burhanpur in Central India in 1630, at whose birth the Queen breathed her last.

Mumtaz could not bear a moment's separation from her husband and accompanied him even to the most dangerous of his military expeditions. She had accompanied him to Burhanpur where the emperor encamped on his way back to Agra after crushing a rebellion in the Deccan by Khan Jahan Lodi. She expired giving birth to her last child, retaining full consciousness to the hour of her death. But before she finally closed her eyes, she asked the emperor to grant her two boons, namely, that he should not marry again and that he should build such a memorial over her grave as would be the wonder of the world. We know that both her wishes were literally fulfilled.

Mumtaz Mahal was at first buried in a garden at Burhanpur. After six months the body was brought over to Agra and interred in the

garden of Raja Jai Singh, great-grandson of Raja Man Singh, where it lay under a temporary pavilion until the grand mausoleum was constructed. The garden of Jai Singh was taken over from him in exchange for another plot of land of the same value and the edifice was erected there.

Shah Jahan was so much overpowered with grief, that for years together he denied himself all pleasure and amusement ; and when the ladies of the court put on gay attire on festive occasions, he turned away from them with a sigh. His hair grew grey and there was no smile on his face. Life had lost its beauty and he walked the earth like a stranger to its joys. Each Friday he would put on his white mourning costume and visit the tomb of his wife. Sometimes he would weep bitterly over the tomb, being a man of an exceptionally emotional nature. On the occasion of the first Urs or death anniversary of Mumtaz one lakh of rupees was given away in charity.

It was a stirring scene when the body of the departed queen was conveyed under royal escort from Burhanpur to Agra. Prince Shuja, the second son of Shah Jahan, was at the head of the procession, being followed

by the court mourners in their white garments. All along the way enormous sums of money were distributed as alms and the crowd grew larger and larger as the funeral marched on towards Agra. Food was given away with a free hand to the poor who blessed the departed soul from the bottom of their hearts.

The way to the Taj is through an extensive garden known as the Mac Donnell park, covering an area of 250 acres. It was laid out during the great famine of 1897. The site was formerly occupied by the houses and gardens of great nobles like Mahabat Khan, Raja Todar Mal, Asaf Khan, Rumi Khan and others.

Shah Jahan started building the Taj in 1631, the third year after his accession to the throne and completed it in 1648, a year before the Commonwealth was declared in England and a year after the construction of the Moti Musjid within the Agra Fort had been taken in hand.

At first a wooden model of the Taj was prepared, and when the same had been approved by the emperor, the construction began. Artists and architects were sent for from all parts of India and even from distant countries like Turkey

and Persia. The chief architect of the Taj was Muhammad Isa Afandi of Turkey, who was assisted by Muhammad Sharif of Samarkand, each drawing a salary of rupees one thousand per month. Muhammad Hanif of Agra was the chief engineer; Ismail Khan of Turkey was the dome-maker; Manohar Singh of Lahore, Bansidhar of Multan, Mohan Lal of Kanauj and many others were employed in executing inlaid work; Amanat Khan of Shiraz made the inscriptions; Wahab Khan of Persia and Muhammad Khan of Baghdad were calligraphers; Zadir Zaman Khan of Arabia was the general artist; Ata Muhammad of Bukhara was the sculptor; Abdulla of Delhi, Muhammad Sajjan of Balkh and Shakrulla of Multan were masons; and Baldeo Dass, Amir Ali and Raushan Khan of Multan were flower-sculptors. We also learn from the Badshah-Namah that Mir Abdul Karim and Makramat Khan supervised the construction of the mausoleum. The design was made by Muhammad Isa on the model of Humayun's tomb at Delhi and all the work was executed by men of Asiatic origin. The story that Geronimo Verroneo, a Venetian by birth, was the architect of the Taj, is a myth.

The Taj was begun in 1631, a year after Mumtaz's death, and completed in 1648 at a

cost variously stated at fifty lakhs to three crores of rupees. At this time the income of the State from land-revenue alone was more than thirty-seven crores of rupees. Twenty thousand workmen were employed in the construction who lived in a newly-founded colony opposite the main gate of the Taj, called Mumtazabad, and now known as Tajganj. The Mumtazabad gate facing the main gate of the Taj can still be seen.

As regards materials for the building, the white Makrana marble was brought from Jaipur, the red sand-stone from the neighbourhood of Fatehpur Sikri, diamond from Panna, turquoise from Tibet, lapis lazuli from Ceylon, jasper from Cambay, malachite from Russia, cornelian from Baghdad, chrysolite from the Nile and various other precious stones and jewels from various parts of the world. Some of these were presented to the emperor by the rulers of other countries or by the nobles of his own kingdom. It is said that during the construction of the Taj an inclined cart-road like that in modern hill-stations had to be made for the purpose of carrying heavy stones to a height of more than 225 ft. This road was about two and a half miles in length, as the slope was very gentle.

We know that some of the loftiest temples in India, like the temple of Jagannath at Puri, were made in the same way.

Between the fine gate of red sandstone and the grand portal of the Taj, lies a spacious quadrangle enclosed by rooms, which was known by the name of Jilo-Khana. Most of these rooms have now disappeared.

The portal of the Taj bears a good resemblance to the gate at Sikandra, the red sandstone structure being profusely inlaid with marble. There are four domed cupolas at the four corners above the central arch which is flanked by two-storeyed rooms on either side. The small domes, eleven in number, just above the archway, with slim minarets at the extremities, greatly heighten the beauty of the whole structure. The gate rises to a height of 100 ft. and there are flights of steps leading to the top. One thing to be particularly noticed here is the marvellous skill with which the letters in black have been inscribed on the gate. They seem to be of the same length and thickness, both above and below, although there is a distance of 80ft. intervening. The same skill has been exhibited on the other

gates of the Taj buildings for which credit should be given to Amanat Khan of Shiraz, who used to draw a salary of rupees one thousand per month. The passages inscribed are taken from the Quran and the aim of both the architects and artists was to give the whole place a look, and the whole atmosphere the joy and sublimity of Paradise according to Islamic conception, as here the remains of Mumtaz were to be laid. This was the feeling—a deeply religious and sacred feeling—which found its outlet and apt expression in the silent, yet speaking language of the edifice of the Taj. The fervent love of the subjects for the Queen who had died a premature death at the age of thirty-eight, only two years after Shah Jahan's accession to the throne, was awaiting an expression, the result of which was the splendid mausoleum of the Taj. Mumtaz had conquered the hearts of her people as did Rani Ahalya Bai in this country, or Queen Victoria in England, or rather in the whole of the British Empire. Her religious fervour, her charity and benevolence, her clemency and motherly affection for her subjects were widely known and admired, which produced their genial effect on the minds of those architects, sculptors and masons who planned

the building, held the chisel or constructed the grand edifice by laying one piece of marble upon another. The sorrow for the sudden and untimely death of their beloved queen sank deep in their hearts; and they longed, in harmony with the feelings of the emperor, to build her a memorial which could be likened unto paradise—a fit abode for the remains of the departed soul. To them Mumtaz was still a living force, an inspiration, a nymph of the air they breathed, a goddess of the art by which they yearned to perpetuate her memory. They laid on her a garb of white marble and adorned it with jewels, to make it resemble the white muslin shroud, interwoven with gold and silver embroidery which covered her body at the time of her burial.

As we pass through the main entrance, under the vaulted roof of the octagonal chamber, we notice a beautiful lamp hanging from the centre, which was presented by Lord Curzon.

The garden of the Taj encloses an area of 1860 ft. by 1000 ft. within lofty walls of red sandstone. There is a marble reservoir of water in the centre of the garden which is approached by pathways down the steps of the gate.

The Taj stands on a marble platform 313 ft. square and 22½ ft. above the ground. A row of cypress trees, newly replaced, and standing on either side of a long, thin pool of water, alongside the pathways, greatly magnify the beauty of the whole surrounding. Most of the old fruit-trees that once stood here at the time of Raja Jai Singh have been removed as they obstructed the view of the Taj from a distance. The oldest tree in the garden is a semal, with a girth of nearly 50 ft. which is said to be more than four centuries old. It stands close to the eastern wall of the enclosure, while the temporary resting-place of Mumtaz is situated within a short distance from the western wall and the mosque proper.

The buildings known as the Mosque and the Jamaat-Khana or gathering place, stand on the west and the east of the Taj respectively. They are exactly the same in outward structure, being made of red sandstone, with domes and arches of marble and similarly ornamented with inlaid work. The mosque can accommodate more than five hundred worshippers, the seats being marked off on the floor for each individual. The exact figure of the gilt pinna-

cle with the crescent of the Taj is inscribed on the pavement in front of the Jamaat-Khana and measures 30 ft.

The mausoleum stands on a double platform : the first one, of red sandstone, is 4 ft. high, in the centre of which stands another of marble, 18½ ft. higher than the first, paved with alternate squares of black and white. At each corner of the marble platform, stands a lofty marble minaret, rising to a height of 162½ ft. above the ground. Each minaret has three galleries, with a flight of 164 steps in the interior, leading to the open cupola at the top.

The mausoleum is of pure white marble and stands in the centre of a chequered marble platform mentioned above. It is 186 ft. square, with a central archway on each of the four sides measuring 66½ ft. high. The central dome on the roof with the gilt pinnacle, has a diameter of 68 ft. and there are four domed cupolas at the four corners. A flight of stairs from the marble platform descends into the underground vaulted chamber where the remains of Mumtaz and Shah Jahan lie deposited. The tomb of the queen is in the centre of the enclosure. Above this vaulted

chamber, in an octagonal room, are the cenotaphs of the queen and her consort, the latter having been placed here by Aurangzeb in 1666. The cenotaphs are beautifully carved and profusely inlaid with gems in flowered patterns. Shah Jahan had placed a golden screen round the cenotaph of Mumtaz, but got it removed afterwards. At present the cenotaphs are enclosed by a marble screen, octagonal in shape and very delicately carved and finely pierced in floral patterns. It was made in ten years and had a door of jasper. Passages from the Quran are beautifully inscribed on the external arches of this building and it is said that as many as fourteen chapters of the Quran have found their place on the walls of the imperial buildings at Agra. Emerald, sapphire, onyx, cornelian, jaspar and other precious stones have been profusely used in executing the inimitable inlaid work which decorates the interior of this exquisitely artistic mausoleum.

A pall of pearls which used to cover the tomb of Mumtaz at the time of Shah Jahan's reign, disappeared long ago, together with the silver doors of the mausoleum, both of which are believed to have been carried off by plunderers.

On the cenotaphs are inscribed the names of the emperor and his wife, and the years of their death. Mumtaz breathed her last in 1630, while Shah Jahan died after a lapse of about 36 years.

The ninety-nine beautiful names of God are inscribed on the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal together with passages from the Quran. These passages remind the true believer of the infinite mercy of God and His promise unto them of the bliss of paradise. "Do not make us, O Lord," it is written on her tomb, "to bear what we have not strength to bear." And again, "He is God, besides Whom there is no God; Who knoweth both the future and the present." And so on.

The tomb of Shah Jahan also bears similar inscriptions. "Despair not of the mercy of God: He forgiveth all sins." Again, "Ye shall have your rewards on the day of judgment..........The present life is delusive and preparatory."

During Bernier's time the underground chamber was opened once a year with great ceremony and only Muhammadans were allowed

admittance. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other precious gems formerly adorned these tombs, but have now disappeared.

The intervening space between the tombs of the emperor and his wife is only six inches, that of Shah Jahan being shoved in here by Aurangzeb, as stated above.

Shah Jahan had the intention of building another mausoleum for himself on the other side of the Jumna, a fit counterpart of the Taj, and of connecting the two by a marble bridge. The foundation had already been laid, when the scrambling for power amongst his sons and the emperor's captivity put an end to the scheme. After Shah Jahan's death, Aurangzeb had the remains of his father interred by the side of Mumtaz. "The remains of my parents," said he, "should lie buried side by side, as they loved each other so strongly." Aurangzeb had no eye for architectural beauty. His watchword was economy. To build another mausoleum like the Taj, thought he, would be "wasteful and ridiculous excess."

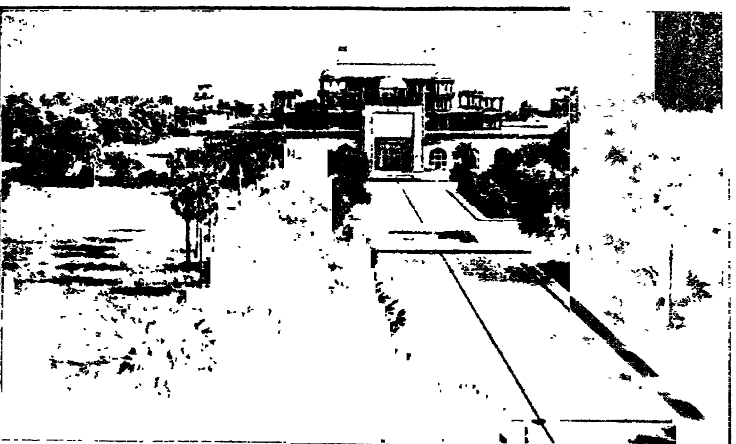
The Taj with the gilt pinnacle rises to a height of 243½ ft. from the garden level, and

is higher than the Qutb Minar at Delhi by a little more than 5 ft. It is a lovely sight when this lofty edifice, with "the aerial grace of its domes, rising like marble bubbles into the azure sky," is reflected on the breast of the slowly-gliding Jumna on moonlit nights.

For a good distant view of the Taj, one should see it from three different places. First, from the top of the gateway; secondly, from the marble platform in the centre of the pathways leading to the Taj; and lastly, from the top of one of the minarets at the four corners of the platform on which the mausoleum stands.

We conclude this chapter by adding that Shah Jahan, with his usual farsightedness, had assigned the income of thirty villages, amounting to a lakh of rupees, for the upkeep and maintenance of the Taj.

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The Tomb of Akbar at Sikandra

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TOMB OF AKBAR AT SIKANDRA.

After capturing Agra, Sikander Lodi laid out the town of Sikandra in 1492. The many ruins of buildings lying about the road from Agra to Sikandra lead to the irresistible conclusion that Sikandra formed a part of the city of Agra in those days. In 1495 Sikander built the famous Baradari which in 1623 was adopted by Jahangir as the tomb for his mother, Mariam-uz-Zamani, the Hindu wife of Akbar. Sikandra is now only a small village, at a distance of about 5 miles from Agra.

The foundation of the famous tomb of Akbar at Sikandra was laid by the emperor himself in 1603, the year of the death of Queen Elizabeth in England. Akbar died in the year 1605, and left the tomb to be completed by his son and successor, Jahangir. It is said that the total cost of construction was somewhere in the neighbourhood of rupees fifteen lakhs. The edifice was finally completed in 1613—a year after the English factories had been established at

Surat. It is recorded by Muhammadan chroniclers that Jahangir walked on several occasions with bare feet from Agra Fort to Sikandra to visit his father's tomb and "rubbed the head of supplication on the threshold", as he had made the last days of Akbar very unhappy.

The surrounding walls of the mausoleum are pierced by four gateways—one in the centre of each side. The minarets above the main entrance had been destroyed by the Jats during their occupation of Agra in 1764, but were re-built by Lord Curzon before the visit of the Prince and the Princess of Wales in 1905, and it is said the work was carried on day and night continually. This gate is 74 ft. high and is of red sandstone like the other three. The minarets at the four corners above the main gateway are of marble and are three-storeyed, their height from the roof being 86 ft. There are flights of steps within, leading to the summits of these minarets, which command an excellent view of Fatehpur Sikri and the Taj. The doors of the gate were formerly of sandal-wood, and were either carried off by the Jats or destroyed during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

The garden within which the mausoleum is laid measures nearly 150 acres, while the

marble platform on which the tomb has been erected covers an area of 400 ft. square. The tomb occupies a central position and is a five-storeyed building, the storeys above the ground-floor becoming smaller and smaller, as the tomb ascends higher and higher. Thus the whole assumes a tapering shape like a Buddhist Vihara and may well be resembled to the Panch Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri. The tomb proper is approached by a passage inclining downwards and bears neither any inscription nor any mark of grandeur. Here lies the great emperor, shorn of all earthly splendour, buried in the dust out of which he was made. A marble tombstone marks the grave within the underground vault and a hush prevails all over the place.

The second, third and fourth storeys above the ground-floor have the same design and the same kind of ornamental arches and domes of marble. The topmost storey is entirely made of marble and was built by Jahangir. The marble trellis-work of the enclosing walls of this terrace, the minarets and the balconies greatly magnify the beauty of the place and the fine carvings and intricate designs baffle description. A clear view of the domes of the Taj can be

obtained through the windows of the surrounding walls.

A tombstone hewn out of a single block of marble is placed in the centre of the terrace, and a marble pedestal stands at the head, on which the famous diamond, the Kohinoor, used to lie. Both the cenotaph and the pedestal are artistically carved. The ninety-nine names of God are engraved on the sides of the tomb, while the words "Allahu Akbar"—"God is great" and "Jalla Jalalahu"—"May His glory be glorified" are written on the northern and southern ends of it.

It is said that a canopy of gold and silver brocade used to cover the tomb, which was carried off by the Jats, along with the armour and royal garments of Akbar which used to lie by the side of the real tomb in the vault below.

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CHAPTER V.

## THE FORTRESS OF FATEHPUR SIKRI.

Fatehpur Sikri lies at a distance of 23 miles from Agra and is only a few furlongs from the old village of Sikri. In 1527 Babar encamped here before proceeding to attack Rana Sangram Singh of Chitor. The name Fatehpur or "town of victory" was probably given to it by Akbar. The fortress is about 7 miles in circumference and is surrounded on three sides by lofty walls, 50 ft. high and 6 ft. deep. On the fourth side there is a big artificial lake constructed by Akbar.

The city was very thickly populated at the time when Akbar held his court here, but now presents a deserted look. The principal roads and the bazar at Fatehpur Sikri are paved with stone, which was done at the time of Akbar.

An 1569 Akbar paid a visit to Sheikh Salim Chishti, a Muhammadan hermit, ninety years old, who lived here in a cave in one of the hillocks near the stone-cutters' mosque. The learned Sheikh was a pious and spiritually

gifted man from the family of Hazrat Khair-uddin and was well-known for his high penances. He was born at Delhi in 1479 and was considered to be the most learned among the Muslim theologians of Western Asia when he came and settled down at Fatehpur Sikri in 1564, at the eighty-fifth year of his age, after spending twenty-two years of his life in Muhammadan centres of learning—in Syria, Arabia and other places. Red sandstone being found here in large quantities, the place has long been inhabited by many stone-cutters. They hailed saint Salim on his arrival and built a mosque for him sometime before the foundation of Akbar's fort and palace.

At this time Akbar was twenty-seven years old, but he had no issue. He had gone on pilgrimage to Ajmer, and as a result of his earnest prayers at the tomb of Hazrat Muin-uddin Chishti for an heir to the throne, he received indications through a dream that he should go and see the holy saint at Sikri and seek his prayers and benedictions for the fulfilment of his heart's desire.

The emperor at once hastened to Sikri, and on meeting the saint, fell at his feet. The

holy man was telling his beads, and even before he had heard Akbar, told him that his desire would be granted. But there was one condition. Akbar must promise to give his son to the service of the pious Sheikh. This, of course, was readily agreed to. It was not long before Akbar came to know that his Hindu wife, Mariam-uz-Zamani, the sister of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber, was pregnant. Agreeably to a suggestion from the saint, Akbar built a palace near the mosque, which came to be known by the name of Rang Mahal, and he sent his pregnant wife to reside at Sikri. In one of the rooms of this palace, now in ruins, prince Salim, afterwards known as Jahangir, was born in the year 1570. Akbar's joy knew no bounds and he named his son after the holy saint. Enormous sums of money were given away in charity, and all the State prisoners were released. Soon a new city, with its palaces and domes, towers and bastioned gates, began to rise and the construction was complete by the year 1574, the same year that the Agra fort was completed. Fatehpur Sikri was the emperor's residence till 1585, after which Akbar removed his seat of government to Lahore and stayed there till 1599.

He returned to Agra in 1600 and lived in his newly-erected Fort until the time of his death in October, 1605.

The statement generally made that Akbar removed his capital from Fatehpur Sikri to Agra at the request of Sheikh Salim Chisti, since the pomp and gaiety of the court was a source of disturbance to his penances, is entirely false and baseless, as the holy saint died in the year 1571, which was three years before the construction of the royal palaces at Fatehpur Sikri were actually complete.

During the great Sepoy mutiny of 1857, some of the mutineers lodged themselves within the walls of Fatehpur Sikri, and it was some time before they could be driven out of the place.

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## THE BARADARI.

As we go up the ridge, we come across a building richly decorated with carving and enclosed by a verandah. It has only one room in the centre and was probably the dwelling-place of one of Akbar's courtiers. It is a Baradari or a structure with twelve doors.

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## THE NAUBAT KHANA.

As we enter by the Agra gate, the first building that meets the eye on the main road is the place of the court musicians who played a triumphal march whenever Akbar made his entrance into the city. It consists of a court surrounded by small rooms and has four gateways. The northern and southern gates have Muhammadan arches, while those on the east and west have Hindu brackets.

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## MINT AND TREASURY.

The first of the palace buildings on the summit of the hill is the mint where coins were struck during the time of Akbar. The treasury stands on the opposite side of the road. Portions of these buildings have now disappeared.

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## THE DEWAN-I-AM.

The great court of the Dewan-i-am measures 368½ ft by 181 ft., and is surrounded on all sides by covered walks. The Chamber of the Dewan-i-am is to the west of this court and is enclosed by a verandah, in the eastern portion of which was the emperor's seat between two screens of

red sandstone, where sat His Majesty, hearing petitions and dispensing justice.

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## THE HAMMAM
## OR
## BATHS.

The baths were a necessary adjunct to all Moghul palaces and buildings and the Hammam of the Turkish Sultana at Fatehpur Sikri with its elaborate arrangements for the supply of hot and cold water is a good reminiscence of the great Moghuls' love for the luxury of baths.

The baths were also used by the physicians of those days as a place for the healing of various kinds of diseases, and those known as the Hakims' baths and situated close by the physicians' quarters, consist of several chambers and are beautifully adorned with plaster work. It is said that sometimes the emperor himself resorted to these baths for pleasure and invigoration. An elaborate process was involved in the treatment administered to the patients, a description of which may be found in the medical books of the East. There is a huge well near by, sunk in the hard rock, which supplied water to these baths.

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## THE DEWAN-I-KHAS.
## OR
## HALL OF PRIVATE AUDIENCE.

This building with its octagonal column surmounted by a huge circular capital in the form of a *Sesh Nag* of Hindu mythology, has a peculiar charm of its own. It was constructed in the year 1574 and stands to the right of a great court measuring 756 ft. by 272 ft., while the Khas Mahal is situated on the side opposite. It looks like a two-storeyed building from a distance, but really consists of a single chamber with a big column in the centre, at the top of which was placed the emperor's throne with seats for ministers or foreign embassies at four corners of the room. It was the most private apartment for the deliberation and despatch of important State business, and from the mode of its construction and the seclusion of the spot provided excellent protection from the unscrupulous activities of eavesdroppers.

It is said that this place also represents the Ibadat-Khana or Hall of Worship where Akbar used to discuss the different forms of religious faith with high priests and men of letters. The

discussion often continued for days and nights together before a definite conclusion was arrived at. Akbar was a real seeker after truth and his mind became unsettled in matters of religion after his contact with the mystic poet Faizi and his brother Abul Fazl, a reputed scholar and a man with a speculative turn of mind. Hindu ascetics, Muhammadan fakirs and Jesuit fathers were all welcome, and gathered on the floor below. Akbar would often descend from his throne on the top of the central column and sit with the men on the floor to discuss religious and philosophical themes. He was gifted with the power to appreciate different points of view, not only in religion, but also in the affairs of State, and so held the balance steady in everything that claimed his attention. The architecture of the Dewan-i-Khas is pre-eminently Hindu, which speaks for Akbar's cosmopolitan tastes. The open space by the side of the Dewan-i-Khas was the garden of the Turkish Sultana or Tambolan Begum.

In the great quadrangle of the Dewan-i-Khas the pavement is laid out in squares of black and white, where the emperor used to play the game of *pachisi*, using the slave girls as chess-pieces. An elevated stone slab in the centre shows where

the emperor sat. Here was the great Moghul in lighter vein. The pachisi court was formerly screened off from the surrounding edifices.

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## THE ASTROLOGER'S SEAT.

Akbar had great reverence for Hindu *Yogis* and was a firm believer in their astrological calculations. The small square chamber with its finely artistic pillars, close to the Dewan-i-Khas, was reserved for a Hindu *Yogi* whose astrological knowledge was a marvel of the age.

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## ANKH MICHAULI.

Not far off from the ***pachisi*** court and behind the astrologer's seat, are three rooms with staircases leading to the roof, where the emperor is said to have been in the habit of playing hide-and-seek with his harem women. The tradition is so persistent that it cannot but be supported as a fact.

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## THE KHAS MAHAL.

This building was completed in 1574 and is now in a dilapidated condition. It stands to the left of a great quadrangle, the right extremity of which is occupied by the Dewan-i-

Khas. The court of the Khas Mahal, measuring 211 ft by 153 ft., is enclosed by cloisters and was originally separated from the great quadrangle by a screen of red sandstone. The Turkish Sultana's house, the Emperor's bed-room and the Girls' school are also situated here.

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## THE TURKISH SULTANA'S HOUSE.

The House of the Turkish Sultana or Tambolan Begum overlooks the *pachisi* court and consists of a single room enclosed by a verandah which was formerly divided into small chambers by means of screens of red sandstone. The whole building is adorned with rich and elaborate carving, without, however, any sign of extravagance. Some of the carvings within the room were multilated during the reign of Aurangzeb, as they bore the figures of birds and animals. The puritanic Aurangzeb scrupulously adhered to the injunctions of the Prophet, which prohibit the representation of anything that is endowed with life. The Turkish bath which was erected by Akbar for this chief wife stands hard by.

Fergusson, the greatest critic of Indian art, says that he could conceive of nothing so

picturesque in outline, so elaborate in finish, and yet so restrained, as the house of the Turkish Sultana.

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## THE KHWAB-GAH.

This was Akbar's bed-room or "house of dreams" at the top of a number of buildings near a large artificial lake 95ft. square. It has beautiful screens of interlaced work in red sandstone and Persian rhymes are inscribed on the walls to the north, east and west. All these inscriptions seek to impress the beauty and sublimity of the spot, "the dust of which is a soothing powder for the lovely eyes of the celestrial nymphs." The ornament in gold and ultramarine has disappeared, but was partially restored by Lord Curzon in 1905 before the visit of the Prince and the Princess of Wales, to given an idea of the original painting.

The most important point in this building is its central position. From this room, Akbar could approach in the twinkling of an eye, the harem, the record office, the Dewan-i-am and other chief buildings in his city, himself remaining practically invisible behind the screens of red sandstone which have now disappeared.

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## THE GIRLS' SGHOOL.

It is a low building to the north of the Khas Mahal consisting of a room and a verandah where the young girls of Akbar's harem were given a sort of miscellaneous training in the direction of general culture and aesthetic nourishment.

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## THE RECORD CHAMBER.

The Record Chamber or Daftar-Khana is a single room enclosed on all sides by a verandah, with a spacious court in front. It is quite close to Akbar's bed-room and stands on an elevated platform.

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## THE HOSPITAL.

It is situated on the north of a large quadrangle near the Astrologer's seat, from which it is separated by a wall with communicating doors. It was formerly divided into several wards f - the patients who were admitted here for treatment. The building is very low and is now in a ruined condition. But the little that remains, shows how unsuitable it was for the purpose of a hospital.

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## THE PANCH MAHAL.

It is a five-storeyed building as the name implies. It is built in the style of a Buddhist *Vihar* and the architecture is essentially Hindu. It assumes a tapering shape as it ascends, each storey being smaller than that beneath it. Roughly speaking, the design bears a resemblance to the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra. The ground-floor has 84 columns, while the topmost roof is supported only on four. The stone screens which acted as a partition for the several chambers, have disappeared. This building was a pleasure retreat for the emperor and his wives and was joined to the Khas Mahal and the *pachisi* court.

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## MARIAM'S PALACE.

Mariam's palace or the palace of Mariam-uz-Zamani, otherwise known as the Sunehra Mahal or the Golden Palace, from the number of golden paintings on its walls, is situated in an enclosure south of the five-storeyed pavilion mentioned above.

Akbar married the daughter of Raja Behari Mal of Amber in 1562, and gave her the title of Mariam-uz-Zamani. She was the mother of

Jahangir who was born at Fatehpur Sikri in 1570.

The walls of this building are inscribed with quotations from the Shah-Namah of Firdausi while the beautiful frescoe painting gives a vivid representation of the events related in Firdausi's book. But some of these frescoes—the Angels, the fall of Adam, the Annunciation—were also the product of Christian influence, as we know that the Jesuit Fathers had been attracted towards Agra by Akbar's spirit of toleration. The Moghul artists who were mostly Hindu, came to have a great fascination for Biblical events, which developed freely under the catholicism of the emperor. The presence of these pictures in Mariam's house, as also her name, have led people to suppose that she was Akbar's Christian wife, but the supposition has no foundation in fact.

Akbar had great respect for the feelings of his Hindu wife, the mother of his heir to the throne, and treated her with the same consideration as he did his chief Muhammadan wife. He had a garden laid out for her near her palace, just as he had a bath constructed for his Turkish Sultana.

Mariam died in 1623 and was interred by her son, Jahangir, at Sikandra, not far from the place where the remains of her departed husband had been buried eighteen years before. Jahangir made a few necessary alterations in the Baradari built by Sikandar Lodi in 1495 and adopted it as the tomb for his mother, as related before.

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## THE PALACE OF JODHBAI.

Jodhbai was the wife of Jahangir, being wedded to him in 1585, the year in which Fatehpur Sikri was abandoned by Akbar. Manmati was her Hindu name and she was the daughter of Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur. The building consists of a huge block of stone edifices and is a splendid monument in point of space. Built in the pavilion style imported from Central Asia, it greatly resembles the Jahangiri Mahal at Agra, both of which were constructed almost simultaneously. The Hindu influence is visible everywhere, both in the architecture and in the ornamental carving, the most conspicuous being the bell and chain of the Hindu temples.

As Fatehpur Sikri was deserted by the emperor in 1585, it is very doubtful if Jodhbai at all inhabited the place, as she was married to

Jahangir that very year. As the court of this building was originally joined by a cloister with Akbar's bed-room, the probability is that it was a part and parcel of the emperor's harem and that after the marriage of Jahangir, it came to have the name of Jodhbai Mahal.

The court in the centre is paved, and measures 179 ft. by 162 ft. It is surrounded by a rectangular block of two-storeyed buildings. The baths for the ladies of the court and the Hawa Mahal or wind-palace with its open screens can also be seen within the walls of this spacious enclosure. The glazed blue tiles over the gabled roofs are noticeable here, as in the Jahangiri Mahal at Agra.

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## THE STABLES.

The stables for horses and camels are situated close by the house of Birbal and provided accommodation for 100 horses and 51 camels for the use of the emperor and his ministerial staff. The stone partitions which separated the compartments in the stables from one another, have vanished.

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## BIRBAL'S HOUSE.

Birbal the Wit, was one of the nine jewels of Akbar's court and also a famous general. Mahesh Das was his original name and he was the only Hindu courtier who cordially professed the New Faith propounded by Akbar. This two-storeyed building was erected for his daughter's residence at Fatehpur Sikri, as his services were constantly required by Akbar from 1571 onwards. Both the Hindu and Muhammadan styles of architecture are noticeable in this magnificent edifice.

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## THE NAGINA MASJID.

The Nagina Musjid or Gem mosque was a small place of worship for the ladies of the harem, like the one at Agra, and is situated near the house of Raja Birbal.

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## THE HATHIPOL OR ELEPHANT GATE.

This is 49ft. high and is flanked by two gigantic elephants of hewn stone which were mutilated during the time of Aurangzeb. Not far off are the water-works which supplied water to the palace. It is said that one of the reasons why Akbar abandoned Fatehpur Sikri

was the great scarcity of water fit for human consumption.

The Kabutar-khana or pigeon-house, the Sangin Burj and the Karwan Sarai with its finely decorated archway are some of the adjacent buildings.

## THE HIRAN MINAR.

This tower was erected by Akbar in memory of his favourite elephant, Hiran, buried at this spot, and was also used by him for shooting game. It rises to a height of 80ft. from the ground and is curiously shaped, being octagonal at the base, circular in the middle and tapering at the top. A spiral staircase in the interior leads to the gallery at the summit, which commands an excellent view of the surrounding country. The whole of the middle portion of the tower is covered over with imitation stone-tusks of elephants, which look like projecting iron spikes from a distance.

## THE JUMA MUSJID.

This mosque was erected in 1571 and is said to have been made in imitation of a great mosque at Mecca. It stands on an enclosure measuring

542 ft. by 438 ft. The long halls on either side of the central chamber, with majestic pillars of Hindu style, are really imposing and inspire an awe and reverence for the place. A gate through which Akbar passed from his bed-room to the mosque is known as the King's gate and is situated on the east of the great enclosure mentioned above.

It is said that one Friday, in the year 1580, Akbar took the place of the High Priest in this mosque and began to read the prayer to the people, in pursuance of the belief that the King was also the Head of the Church. But he was suddenly overpowered with strong emotion at the sight of the congregation and broke off in the midst of his pompous effort. The prayer was concluded by the court preacher, and Akbar never assumed the role of a priest-king again.

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## THE BULAND DARWAZA.

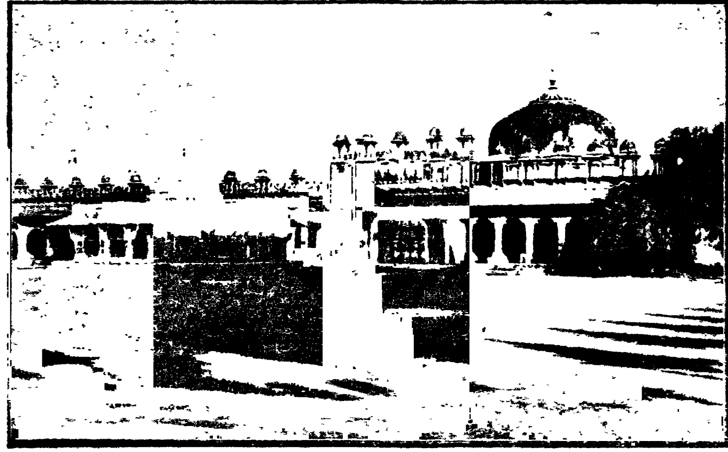
This great gate was erected by Akbar in 1601 in commemoration of his victory in Ahmadnagar and Khandesh in Southern India, as recorded in an inscription on the eastern side. It is 176 ft. high from the ground and is the tallest and the most stately in the whole of India. It is also one

of the greatest in the world. The inlaid marble work in the arches and the Hindu style of architecture in the gallery above the entrance are worthy of notice. On this gate are inscribed the famous lines—"Jesus said (on whom be peace) the word is a bridge; pass over it, but build not upon it; he who hopeth for an hour, may hope for eternity; the world is but an hour—spend thy hours in prayer, for the rest is unseen."

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## SALIM CHISHTI'S TOMB.

This is the only marble edifice in Akbar's palace at Fatehpur Sikri and is said to have taken the place of an earlier structure in red sandstone which had been built by Akbar. On his accession to the throne, Jahangir had this beautiful marble mausoleum constructed for his god-father, Sheikh Salim Chishti. The platform on which the tomb is erected, as well as the inside floor, is inlaid with marble mosaic, while the screens enclosing the verandah outside are beautifully perforated in ornamental designs. A very noticeable feature of the pillars supporting the beams of the porch in front, are the singularly designed marble brackets in the form of S which have been imitated here from the stone-cutters' mosque. The artistic canopy



The Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri

round the tomb is made from sandal-wood and is inlaid with beautiful floral patterns designed from mother-of-pearl. The whole work, both inside and out, has been executed with such elegance and taste that it defeats the power of the pen to describe it. An inscription on the inside wall of the tomb tells us that saint Salim died in 1571.

The story goes that one of his infant sons gave his life so that Akbar's son, Jahangir, might live. This infant's tomb is erected near by.

There are other tombs within the great enclosure, the most important among which is that of Islam Khan who was the Sheikh's grandson and rose to be the Governor of Bengal.

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## THE HOUSES OF FAIZI AND ABUL FAZL.

These two houses stand within a few paces from the Buland Darwaza in an outside enclosure, and in close proximity to each other. These two brothers were among the nine jewels of Akbar's court and were in constant attendance on the emperor during his stay at Fatehpur Sikri.

THE END

# APPENDIX

## AGRA CITY.

The City of Agra stands on the right bank of the Jumna and covers a vast area. It is divided into 212 Muhallas, the Muhammadan population being less than half the Hindu population. Formerly the whole city was enclosed by a wall which was erected by Raja Jai Singh II, the then Governor of the place under Aurangzeb's successor, and founder of the present city of Jaipur. The city had 16 gates, of which the most prominent was the Delhi Gate which is still standing.

The old name of Agra was *Agraban* and it was a Hindu stronghold at the time of Raja Kansa. The name of the Pandavas is also associated with many places in and about the city of Agra. In 1475 (the year when King Edward IV of England invaded France and Michael Angelo was born) Badal Singh had built a fort at Agra, by the name of Badalgarh, which was pulled down, about a century later, to make room for Akbar's magnificent Fort. In 1492 (the year of the discovery of America)

Sikandar Lodi captured Agra and laid out the town of Sikandra after his own name. After his death in 1518, he was succeeded by his son, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi who ruled over Agra until his defeat and death at the battle of Panipat in 1526.

Agra continued to maintain its importance during the days of Moghal supremacy in India owing to its strategical advantages, and even during the British period it was made the capital of the North-West Provinces, and the seat of Government was transferred to Allahabad only after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

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## THE JUMA MUSJID OR CATHEDRAL MOSQUE.

This splendid mosque was built by Jahanara, the eldest daughter of Shah Jahan, who remained unmarried all her life and was the nurse and constant companion of her father during the days of his captivity within the Fort at Agra. She was a saintly woman and a good connoisseur of art and architecture. It is said that most of the marble edifices erected by Shah Jahan were inspired by her. She was the only individual whom Aurangzeb respected and feared.

The mosque stands opposite the Agra Fort station and was erected at a cost of five lakhs of rupees. It was begun in 1644, and completed in 1649, a year after the completion of the Taj.

The central arch is more than 40 ft. high, and there are minor arches on either side. The building is made of red sandstone, the three domes on the roof being inlaid with thin lines of white marble, producing a fantastic effect. This mosque is seldom visited by travellers now-a-days, as Agra contains other buildings of a far more fascinating nature.

Jahanara died on the 6th of September, 1681, in the 67th year of her age, and was buried near Delhi.